

28 June, 2020 -Arusha Community Church – Family Worship Service, 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Order of service prepared by **Christy Rowe Miller** and Sermon by **Dr. Derrick Matthews**.

Welcome to all! We continue with our written guide to worship during this challenging time. We continue fervent prayers for all affected by the virus, for those who have lost a loved one, for our congregation, our country, and for all the world. We pray for God's upholding hand during physical, emotional, and economic hard times. We beg for God's mercy and grace.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 89: 1-4, 15-18

- ¹ I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.
- ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.
- ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
- ⁴ I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations."^[a]
- ¹⁵ Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,
who walk in the light of your presence, LORD.
- ¹⁶ They rejoice in your name all day long;
they celebrate your righteousness.
- ¹⁷ For you are their glory and strength,
and by your favor you exalt our horn.^[a]
- ¹⁸ Indeed, our shield^[a] belongs to the LORD,
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Gathering worship hymn: I will sing of the Mercies of the Lord Forever (Traditional Hymn, not in Mission Praise)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_Db0p6VaZ8

Hymn: My hope is built (MP1334)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvLxZEU02uI>

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly trust in Jesus' name.

My hope is built . . .

*Christ alone, cornerstone,
weak made strong in the Saviour's love.
Through the storm He is Lord,
Lord of all.*

When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil,
my anchor holds within the veil.

*Christ alone, cornerstone,
weak made strong in the Saviour's love.
Through the storm He is Lord,
Lord of all.*

He is Lord, Lord of all.

Christ alone . . .

Christ alone . . .

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
oh, may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
faultless stand before the throne.

*Christ alone . . .
(x4)*

Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradbury
Words and music by Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan & Eric Liljero © 2011 Hillsong Music Publishing (APRA). CCLI: 6158927

Confession

Almighty God, we confess that we cannot free ourselves from sin's power. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. We have strayed from your ways like lost sheep, and have followed too much the desires of our own hearts. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, that we may want to do your will and glorify Your name. Amen.

Absolution

God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, that whosoever believes in Him will have everlasting life. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Confess, and believe that your sins are forgiven.

Confessional Hymn: Refiner's fire (MP921)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Y8zP34AhuU>

Purify my heart,
let me be as gold and precious silver;
purify my heart,
let me be as gold, pure gold.

*Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire
is to be holy,
set apart for You, Lord;
I choose to be holy,
set apart for You, my Master,
ready to do Your will.*

Purify my heart,
cleans me from within and make me holy;
purify my heart, cleans me from my sin, deep within.
Refiner's fire . . .

Word and music by Brian Doerksen © 1990 Vineyard Songs/Song Solutions Copycare www.songsolutions.org

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 28: 5-9

⁵ Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. ⁶ He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. ⁷ Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: ⁸ From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹ But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."

Acclamation Hymn: Shout to the north (MP1094)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctc3GqWaV3U>

Men of faith, rise up and sing
of the great and glorious King;
you are strong when you feel weak,
in your brokenness complete.

*Shout to the north and the south,
sing to the east and the west:
Jesus is Saviour to all,
Lord of heaven and earth.*

Rise up women of the truth,
stand and sing to broken hearts,
who can know the healing power
of our glorious King of love.

Shout to the north . . .

We've been through fire,
we've been through rain;
we've been refined

by the power of His name.
We've fallen deeper in love with You,
You've burned the truth on our lips.

Shout to the north . . .

Rise up church with broken wings;
fill this place with songs again,
of our God who reigns on high:
by His grace again we'll fly.

Shout to the north . . .

Lord of heaven and earth. (3 times)

Words and music by Martin J Smith

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Scripture Reading: Romans 6: 12-23

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in[a] Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

Worship Hymn: O God, You are my God (MP1340)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIBcGVnSxNU>

O God, You are my God,
and I will ever praise You;
O God, You are my God,
and I will ever praise You.
I will seek You in the morning,
I will learn to walk in Your ways;

and step by step You lead me,
and I will follow You all of my days.

David (Beaker) Strasser

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10: 40-42

⁴⁰ “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Ministry of the Word: Derrick Mathews

The True Reward – Matthew 10: 40-42 with a little help from Jeremiah 28

Often when trying to understand and reflect on scripture it helps to read of the passages before that scripture, sometimes even the entire chapter. To get the full context it is even more important to read the chapters before and after also.

In today's Gospel Jesus is giving out some instructions to His disciples before sending them out to tell the Good News in the Galilean countryside. He knows that they are going to encounter many challenges and possible rejections, some kindly, some not so kindly. It would be better to prepare them first before they receive the rejections and opposition of people not used to hearing what the disciples are prepared to teach.

Some of the responses that Jesus warns them about are given in this passage. Some will accept Jesus through these disciples and recognize His true relationship with the Father. They will realise that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.

Others, however, will consider Jesus and by extension his disciples, to be a prophet, a holy man of God but not God Himself. They will consider but not necessarily follow the wisdom that is being taught. They will not recognize Jesus for who He is, but may look to the words as coming from God, without seeing God. People may remain skeptical of the truthfulness of what the prophet is saying and give it no heed. In fact, true prophets were rarely recognized or followed by the people they spoke to. They were usually persecuted and rarely welcomed. The truth of what the prophet is saying, and in consequence, the necessity of paying attention to what he is saying is based on the faith of the hearer. As people we tend to believe those prophets who proclaim what we want to hear. Otherwise a prophet is unwelcome or even actively opposed.

This situation is highlighted in the Old Testament scripture this morning. Jeremiah, God's true prophet, confronts the false prophet Hananiah. Both claim to be prophets. What Hananiah claims is more in line with what the people want to hear. Many times we prefer to elevate to the position of prophet the people who agree with our general way of thinking, people who make us feel good about ourselves. We do not wish to hear from those who make us feel bad or convict us of wrongdoing in our way of life. At this time of the Old Testament, Jeremiah is explaining God's punishment on the people of Judah for turning away from God's ways. Hananiah is predicting the downfall of their oppressors at God's hands. Who do you think people want to listen to more?

Others will see in the disciples' words a philosophical way to live a righteous life. They will

acknowledge that what the disciples are teaching is a good moral code by which to live by, much as Socrates and Plato taught over the years. It may even be an occasion for a good debate as to what is moral and righteous and what is wrong and evil in the world, without really recognizing the true source of righteousness in this world. Their righteousness will be based on their own presumption of their good works and deeds that they have done.

In the end though, Jesus places deeds over words. “Talk is cheap.” If the person actively welcomes, and helps His disciples, that is, “gives a cup of cold water [when the disciple is hot and thirsty]”, he or she truly will selflessly receive them into their life and pay attention to the message. They will not focus on what they can get out of what they do. That person will not worry about their own goodness before others or whether they are righteous in the eyes of others. They will be concerned about the suffering of those who are in need of service. These persons will be the servants of God, the ones who look to serve, not to be served. Their just reward will come as a result of their selflessness and humility to others. They “will certainly not lose their reward.”

Questions:

- In this time of internet preachers, prophets, bishops and apostles proclaiming themselves as speaking on God's behalf, how can one know who is really speaking God's word?
- Have you seen people who speak God's good news of love to others but are for some reason poorly treated by others? How do you think you would have received the disciples if they had come to your door?
- Have you yourself wanted to tell someone else about God's Good News, but were concerned about the reception you might receive? Would you do anything different about it next time the occasion might present itself?

Offertory hymn: What a friend we have in Jesus (MP746)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Mhv94lixXw>

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear –
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful,
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness –
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge!

Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
thou wilt find a solace there.

Words by Joseph Scriven
Music by Charles Crozat Converse

Prayers: (Open to the moving of the Spirit) *Adapted from an earlier prayer of Erwin Kinsey*

For the offerings: Gracious God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, you call us from idleness to action, from silence to speech, from death to life. With these gifts, we offer ourselves to you, and ask that you grant us the strength to give more completely.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer

For the Church of God: Gracious God, you who see how we participate in praise and yet are so prone to deny your Son in the same breath. Gather us together by the Holy Spirit, help us to grow in courage to defend you and the cause of the oppressed, the poor, the needy, and the helpless. Help us to bring hope to those who have lost hope, to prisoners, to believers who are persecuted for your name, and to those in sorrow and grief. Help us to assist the sick and sad, the lonely, orphans, elderly and widows. Confirm that you live in us by the gifts of your Spirit, that we may give witness to Christ by lives built on faith, hope, love, and obedience.

For our families and friends: that by word and example we may always encourage each other to follow Christ.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer

For those who have not chosen you as Friend, who do not love you: but persecute your church, give us unity to love even them, and to stand steadfast until Christ returns in glory.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer

For all people of every race and nation: that they may come to know the saving grace of our one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer,
Amen**

Passing of the peace: May the Peace of the Lord be with you.../ And also with you.

Sending Hymn:

O Jesus, I have promised (MP501)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73NHwbWX658>

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised
to serve Thee to the end;
be Thou for ever near me,
my Master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle
if Thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if Thou wilt be my guide.

- 2 O let me feel Thee near me;
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

- 3 O let me hear Thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

- 4 O Jesus, Thou hast promised,
to all who follow Thee,
that where Thou art in glory
there shall Thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
my Master and my friend.

- 5 O let me see Thy footmarks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in Thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my friend!

*Words by John Ernest Bode
Music by James William Elliott*

Benediction:

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now, and forever. Amen

Go in Peace, to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.