

Worship for July 10, 2022

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

*Call to Worship Psalm 95

O come, let us sing to the Lord!

Shout to the rock of our salvation!

**Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving,
singing joyful songs of praise.**

*Hymn 1 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God, Almighty!

Prayer of Confession

**Mighty and merciful God, you have called us to be your people
and claimed us for the service of Jesus Christ.**

We confess that we have not lived up to our calling.

**We have been timid and frightened disciples, forgetful of your powerful presence, ignoring
the strength of your Spirit among us.**

**O God, forgive us in our weakness, strengthen us anew, and gift us with everything we need
to fulfill our common calling, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

*Hymn 698 Take, O Take Me As I Am

Assurance of Forgiveness

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

May the God of mercy, who forgives all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Old Testament Reading Psalm 103 Pew Bible p.

Time With Our Young Disciples

New Testament Reading Luke 10: 25-37 Pew Bible p.

Morning Message

Someone I love is a lawyer. Early on, the stress of the courtroom, the imposing figure of the judge on the bench, the attorneys on the other side of the courtroom, the fate of her client- all of it depending on how well each attorney presents his or her case, playing by the rules- evoked insurmountable anxiety. A few years into her career as a defense attorney, she changed direction and that seems to suit her better.

And, in a simplified sense, that is what is going on the opening scene of today's scripture. A learned man-spit-polished and noble, with a spine seemingly made of steel and no compassion in his voice, confronts Jesus.

The man, an expert in Mosaic law, stands up to test Jesus. Like the Pharisees, who were his colleagues, he wants to know if Jesus will use the Torah properly to answer the following question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life? Cite the chapter and verse please."

But this is Jesus. And this is the gospel of Luke. Anyone expecting or demanding a direct answer is bound to be disappointed.

Jesus employs a different method of engaging this man. The Socratic method: answering a question with another question.

"What is written in the law? What do you read there that might address your question?"

He might also have asked, "What do you think is the answer?"

How many times growing up did I ask my parents' permission to do one thing or another, something I knew would challenge their idea of safety or expense or what is an appropriate activity for a teenager. I could count on getting one of those looks that said, "You know the answer to that."

The lawyer responds with the prescribed answer: "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."

Jesus congratulates him on the answer, but, draws him in a little closer and we know, because we've heard the story so many times, that Jesus wants more. He wants all of us, as the scriptures say.

"Do this and you will live."

And the man takes the bait. After all, he has a reputation to maintain.

"Who is my neighbor?"

Then Jesus begins to tell stories, and his stories are always packed full of meaning and this one doesn't disappoint.

Jesus puts his new lawyer friend in the story so he can't miss the point. When our grandson was here a few weeks ago, we entertained him for hours showing him all the videos of him-from birth on-that were saved in my phone. A day or so later, he climbed up on our bed and said, "Fifif, let's whatch videos of me."

I'm not sure the man in our story would really want to watch videos of himself. But this is how Jesus tells the story:

Two experts in the law walk by a man lying by the side of the road, beaten within an inch of his life. They know the commandments: to love God and neighbor. They memorized those verses as kids. But, even

though they know them by heart, they don't stop to help the man in need. No, they pass by on the other side.

But then a third traveler comes by, and seeing the injured man, shows hospitality and kindness and mercy- all in generous measure.

You know this- Jews and Samaritans had been at enmity for generations. Jews believed Samaritans were infidels. And yet, in Jesus' story, who does the right thing? The Samaritan. The unlikely one. The one who is the theological enemy of the Jewish lawyer.

But listen to this twist of a response: "The one who showed him mercy." It is the motive of the Samaritan's ministrations that hit their mark with the lawyer. And we know, this is a matter of the heart.

How many of your hearts were broken Monday when you heard the news of the sniper attack in Highland Park, Illinois?

I couldn't bear to watch the news coverage but I couldn't walk away from it. Where are the helpers, as Mr. Rogers would ask. Who is taking care of the people who abandoned those lawn chairs and purses and hats and baby strollers?

Dear God, why? Why must innocent people die in such a savage, senseless way?

And then the stories started coming in about the victims. And then there were stories about the first responders...and the fellow by-standers, the neighbors, the merchants, the regular folk like you and me. A well-loved Highland Park tradition, one that was sheer frivolity with bands and fire engines and floats and candy tosses.

What could go wrong? Everything.

The next morning, I saw a couple being interviewed who had been at the parade. They were not injured. A young man came running up to them, thrusting his baby in their arms. Will you watch him? My wife was hit and I need to check on her. They exchanged phone numbers and the little boy stayed in the home and the arms of perfect strangers for hours. The mother survived.

And then there was the couple that shielded their two-year-old son with their own bodies, literally laying down their lives for their child.

There was no time for debate or consultation or background checking or anything else but the will to survive and trust. An uncommon amount of immediate action that saved the lives of some while ending the lives of others.

There were other similar violent scenes all around the country last week. Late Thursday night we heard that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had been shot. In the morning we learned he had died.

Who will be neighbor to the Japanese?

Much closer home, we had a tragic event in our neighborhood. The beloved dog of one of our families attacked the beloved dog of another family while walking around the block. The dog died.

We know who the neighbors are. But how do we show mercy in this terrible circumstance? What is the most merciful thing we can do? And are we to judge who receives mercy?

*Affirmation of Faith The Apostles' Creed p. 35

* Hymn 580 Gloria Patri

Service of Ordination and Installation

Through the voice of the church, God has called the following members to ordained and active service:

Harold Bias, Betty Dennison, Tim Moore, and Judy Napier

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

*Hymn 606 Doxology

*Prayer of Dedication

Blessed are you, O God of all creation; through your goodness, we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your church. Amen.

*Hymn 187 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

*Blessing

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Alleluia! Amen.

*Postlude