



First United Methodist Church of Moweaqua

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Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors. The People of the First United Methodist Church.

Self - Guided worship For October 10, 2021

You may go at your own pace. Some ideas for centering yourself for worship: Set a particular time and a particular place. Light a candle as you begin and extinguish it as you end. Set aside a place in your home that is quiet, perhaps even a space where that is the only thing that will happen in that space- a spot in a spare bedroom, a corner of the living room, or a place that can be changed and used at the time. Turn off distractions like the TV or the computer. Take some deep centering breaths as you begin. Take your time and be present to the Holy Spirit at work in you.

Opening Sentences

God is holy, God is enthroned on the praises of Israel. In God my forebears trusted; they trusted as God delivered them. Let my feet hold fast to the ways of God' and treasure God's words in my heart.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 22:1-15

Prayer of Confession

Almighty and merciful God, unto whose blessedness I ascend, not by the frailty of flesh but by activity of the soul: By your inspiration lead me always to seek after that heavenly city where my eternal treasure lies, and by your mercy allow me to enter it. You meet my every need and provide for me out of your abundance. You give me far more than I ask or deserve by promising the riches of eternal life. Yet I am easily led astray. I become very attached to the things of this earth and put my trust in them; then I am disappointed when they do not satisfy. For putting temporal things above heavenly things forgive me, O God. Knowing that all things are possible with you, in confidence I ask forgiveness be granted in Jesus name.

Time of Silent Prayer

Assurance of Forgiveness

Accept the good news, Christ died for me while I was yet a sinner; that proves God's love toward me. In the name of Jesus Christ, I have been forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open my heart and mind by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as I read these scriptures I may hear with joy what you say to me today. Amen.

First Lesson: Hebrews 4:12-16

Second Lesson: Mark 10:17-31

Meditation on the Scripture: See meditation page

Offering (You may wish to place your offering in a prominent place at this time as a symbol of bringing it before God and then mail it later)

Offertory Prayer:

Most gracious and loving God, you give me all good things. You sent me your son that I might know of your great love for me. May I give to you as generously as you have given to me. Bless my offering today as I come before you. Magnify my efforts that through what I offer, your name may be glorified and those in need may hear your words, and see your face. I pray today in the name of your son Jesus the risen Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Joys and Concerns:

Most Powerful God, the spirit that was in Christ is given to me also that your word may be known, even to little children. Give me insight into your word and support me as I seek to bring your truth to others. Free me to be able to have a sense of wisdom and calm as I live and work in my community of church and school and work. Bless those who I name before you _____. I give thanks for the joys that I have encountered this week. The joy of celebrating birthdays for_____ and anniversaries for_____. The joys of sun and rain and the joys of nature are all around me, help me to enjoy them. The simple joy of knowing I live in a community that cares for me. As I go into this week give me the strength and courage to face unafraid each day knowing you are beside me. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Benediction:

May the love of God, the peace of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be mine today and always. Amen.

Scriptures:

Hebrews 4:12-16 Common English Bible (CEB)

12 because God's word is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to the point that it separates the soul from the spirit and the joints from the marrow. It's able to judge the heart's thoughts and intentions. 13 No creature is hidden from it, but rather everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of the one to whom we have to give an answer.

14 Also, let's hold on to the confession since we have a great high priest who passed through the heavens, who is Jesus, God's Son; 15 because we don't have a high priest who can't sympathize with our weaknesses but instead one who was tempted in every way that we are, except without sin. 16 Finally, let's draw near to the throne of favor with confidence so that we can receive mercy and find grace when we need help.

Mark 10:17-31 Common English Bible (CEB)

17 As Jesus continued down the road, a man ran up, knelt before him, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to obtain eternal life?" 18 Jesus replied, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except the one God. 19 You know the commandments: Don't commit murder. Don't commit adultery. Don't steal. Don't give false testimony. Don't cheat. Honor your father and mother." 20 "Teacher," he responded, "I've kept all of these things since I was a boy." 21 Jesus looked at him carefully and loved him. He said, "You are lacking one thing. Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." 22 But the man was dismayed at this statement and went away saddened, because he had many possessions. 23 Looking around, Jesus said to his disciples, "It will be very hard for the wealthy to enter God's kingdom!" 24 His words startled the disciples, so Jesus told them again, "Children, it's difficult to enter God's kingdom! 25 It's easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom." 26 They were shocked even more and said to each other, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them carefully and said, "It's impossible with human beings, but not with God. All things are possible for God." 28 Peter said to him, "Look, we've left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "I assure you that anyone who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farms because of me and because of the good news 30 will receive one hundred times as much now in this life—houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and farms (with harassment)—and in the coming age, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last. And many who are last will be first."

Psalm 22:1-15 Common English Bible (CEB)

- 1 My God! My God, why have you left me all alone? Why are you so far from saving me— so far from my anguished groans?
- 2 My God, I cry out during the day, but you don't answer; even at nighttime I don't stop.
- 3 You are the holy one, enthroned. You are Israel's praise.
- 4 Our ancestors trusted you— they trusted you and you rescued them;
- 5 they cried out to you and they were saved; they trusted you and they weren't ashamed.
- 6 But I'm just a worm, less than human; insulted by one person, despised by another.
- 7 All who see me make fun of me— they gape, shaking their heads:
- 8 "He committed himself to the Lord, so let God rescue him; let God deliver him because God likes him so much."
- 9 But you are the one who pulled me from the womb, placing me safely at my mother's breasts.
- 10 I was thrown on you from birth; you've been my God since I was in my mother's womb.
- 11 Please don't be far from me, because trouble is near and there's no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls surround me; mighty bulls from Bashan encircle me.
- 13 They open their mouths at me like a lion ripping and roaring!
- 14 I'm poured out like water. All my bones have fallen apart. My heart is like wax; it melts inside me.
- 15 My strength is dried up like a piece of broken pottery. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you've set me down in the dirt of death.

Meditation:

In 2019, a famous portrait of 18th-century French chemist Antoine Lavoisier and his wife, Marie Anne, was sent to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's conservation lab. The job at hand was the removal of varnish to restore the vibrancy of the great work. However, during the process, the conservation specialists discovered a hidden sketch under the painting.

Since its creation in 1788, the painting as known to the art world depicts the Lavoisiers as humble leaders of a scientific revolution. In the picture, Marie Anne leans over her husband, who is hard at work at his table of specialized instruments.

But after months of analysis using infrared imaging and other state-of-the-art techniques, the experts discovered that the original painting of Lavoisier and his wife was far less flattering, depicting the couple as wealthy nobles living a lavish lifestyle. In the artist's original depiction, the scientific instruments are absent, the table is inlaid with expensive brass details, and Marie Anne is wearing an elegant gown and fancy hat.

Leonardo da Vinci, was one of the most diversely talented individuals to have ever lived. Though Leonardo was never a wealthy man, he was able to intimately observe the trappings of great wealth in the court of the Duke of Milan, where he lived for 16-years. During this time, as part of a treatise he was writing on painting, Leonardo offered various instructions for painters, including advice about leading their lives. He urged fellow artists to avoid getting too wealthy, because as he said, "money is celebrated only for its own sake" and is "a magnet for envy." Regarding priorities, Leonardo believed virtue and not wealth was the key to happiness. In his treatise, he remarked, the "glory of the virtue of mortals is far greater than that of their treasures."

How fitting are both these stories as we read today's Gospel episode about a rich young man. Regarding his priorities, the young man believes that wealth is the key to happiness. To restore the vibrancy of his soul, if you will, he must first remove the dull varnish of selfishness.

In today's Lesson, the rich young man kneels before Jesus in the hope of receiving the guidance he is so desperately seeking. The young man's spirit is troubled. He possesses great wealth, but he is unhappy. In this unsettled state, he says to Jesus, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers, "You know the commandments: You must not kill. You Must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not bring false witness. You must not defraud. Honor your father and mother" (Mk.10:17,19). "Master," the rich young man protests, "I have kept all these from my earliest days." He has not murdered nor committed adultery nor stolen nor lied nor cheated, and he loves his parents — but he is still not happy! Then Jesus utters those timeless words on where our priorities must lie: "There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow Me. But his face fell at these words, and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth" (Mk.10:20-22).

What do we suppose Jesus is getting at here? What does that rich man's problem have to do with our problems? The answer is "everything."

We too long for the sense of fulfillment — the feeling of well-being — the peace of mind and soul, the happiness that brought the rich young man to his knees before Jesus. Like the rich young man, we are subject to frustration and disillusionment. We may even experience guilt feelings over our preoccupation with the attainment of happiness. Like the rich young man, we want to know, once and for all, why we are still chasing after happiness: Good Teacher, we ask, what must we do to share in everlasting life?

Therefore, we must not imagine that the formula for a rewarding and fulfilling life that Jesus proposes in today's Gospel episode is directed exclusively to the very rich. His invitation to the rich young man: "Come and follow me" is extended to us all. Follow me, he is telling us. It is our duty, our priority, to follow Jesus on the road to our happiness. But first, we must eliminate the principal cause of the frustration and disillusionment that lies in our path. And that cause is self-centeredness.

What is self-centeredness? It most assuredly is not the natural desire we have for our happiness. God made us to be happy. God wants us to be happy. God wants us to want to be happy. Instead, it is the mistaken notion that we can be happy "on our own," so to speak. It is the mistaken notion that we can substitute our formula for God's. It is the mistaken notion that we are the sole authorities on where our duties lie. It is the mistaken notion that our happiness is unrelated to the happiness of others. Only by losing ourselves in loving service to others can we find the happiness we seek. And on this point, there is no "varnishing over the truth!"

The rich young man had the mistaken notion that not being a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, a liar, or a cheat was the complete fulfillment of his duty to his neighbor. That was his formula for life, but not God's, as Jesus explained. Along with the responsibility not to do violence to one's neighbor, God imposes the duty to bind up his wounds. Along with the commitment not to take from one's neighbor, God imposes the responsibility to provide for his needs. And it is this divine formula of service to others that Jesus implored the rich young man to embrace. Again, the real lesson is this: only by losing ourselves in loving service to others can we find the happiness we seek.

According to one of author Ernest Hemingway's biographers, on the first day of each new year, Hemingway gave away some of his most treasured possessions. And when people asked him why he did this, he would say, "If I can give them away, then I own them. But if I can't give them away, they own me."

What do you say? Do you own your money and things – your most treasured possessions -- or do they own you? And if we are taking it seriously, we must not imagine that the formula for a rewarding and fulfilling life that Jesus proposes in today's Gospel episode is directed exclusively to the very rich. His invitation to the rich young man: "Come and follow me" is extended to us all. Follow me, and I will show you the road to life's fulfillment. And that is the unvarnished truth!