

An Order of Worship for the Home

The Third Sunday of Easter – April 26, 2020

Teaching through 1 Peter during the Easter season. (week 2, chapter 2)

This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak to one another and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can schedule a time to worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Invocation

Reader 1: He is risen!
Reader 2: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Reader 1: All thanks and praise to God...
Reader 2: Father, Son and Spirit...
Together: Amen.
Reader 2: He is risen!
Reader 1: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Psalm 116:1-4

I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my pleas for mercy.
² Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
I suffered distress and anguish.
⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
"O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!"

Confession & Absolution

Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in the fellowship. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered. Our confession follows the lead of the tax collector in Jesus' parable.

But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' (Luke 18:13)

Christian Confessing: God, be merciful to me, a sinner!

Christian Responding: Jesus told us "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." As you have humbled yourself under God's mercy, so you are exalted in his joy. By the grace of God, and the work of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Together: Amen.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:14)

Gospel for the Second Sunday of Easter

Please read Luke 24:13-35 from the Bible translation of your choice.

As two disciples travel the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, they are met by Jesus. As their eyes are opened to the presence of God and his ongoing work, their hearts turn from grief to joy. May our hearts also burn within us at the nearness of Jesus. May our eyes be open to the presence of God and his ongoing work in our world.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

First Peter 2:4-10 (message text)

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,
“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and
“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Message from Pastor Matt
Essential in God's Eyes

What is essential? That's become a big question as we navigate a response to the dueling threats of coronavirus infections and economic depression.

Which items on my grocery list are essential? Pasta? Milk? Chocolate? Toilet paper?
Which jobs in our community are essential?

The jobs which keep me safe? The jobs which entertain me? The jobs which treat illness? The job that puts food on my family's table?

Essential and non-essential have become labels for items, industries, and activities. While not intended, the labels have become attached to people. As human beings we've always had a hard time separating our identities from the jobs we do. Therefore, when your day-to-day work is devalued, it's hard to retain a sense of personal value.

This reality has surfaced in new ways, but it's not really new. Unfortunately, societies have always found ways to rank importance and status. Fame, wealth, position, talent, beauty, age – all of these have been used to categorize people as “in” or “out,” good or bad, essential or non-essential.

If we're honest, we can identify times we've labelled people according to these standards. If we're really honest, we can identify times we were labelled non-essential by one of these measures. If you know what that's like, then you know what it means to feel shame.

Shame is hard to escape. Whether the labels come from individuals or the wider culture, when they start to stick it's hard to break free. Our tendency is to respond by acting in ways which allow shame to fester. Here are three ways we react to shame poorly.

We isolate. When we feel shame it makes us pull away from other people. That's an important tendency to recognize right now, because it's all-too-easy to isolate during this season of social distancing.

We claim authority. We pretend to have a handle on things. We put forward a good show of having life under control. We want other people to believe that we aren't bothered by the labels. In reality, we're just hoping to fool people because we believe there will be even more shame if they know we're struggling.

We ignore. Not only do we hide our struggles from other people, we attempt to fool ourselves as well. We do everything we can to distract ourselves from the feelings of shame because they seem too hard to deal with.

When we react in these ways, shame becomes overwhelming. Labels are near impossible to shake. It doesn't help when most advice tells us to simply shrug it off. There are too many voices who encourage us to look deep within ourselves to find strength. That makes the struggle worse. When we can't find strength in ourselves it only increases the shame, because it sounds like other people have some inner strength which we lack.

However, your God's perspective is different. He knows you won't find what you need inside yourself. He knows the shame you feel from failing to meet misguided expectations, or falling short of someone else's demands. He knows you need a way forward.

Instead of telling you to find answers in yourself, he provides answers in his word. The apostle Peter was writing to Christians facing persecution – ridicule, harassment, imprisonment, beatings and even death. They knew the shame of being deemed unimportant. Within their culture, the label placed on them was quickly changing from “unimportant” to “problem.”

That's why, when Peter quotes God's Word calling Jesus the cornerstone, he includes the next line – “whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” And then, to make sure we're getting the point, he adds, “So the honor is for you who believe...”

“So the honor is for you who believe...”

Honor is the antidote for shame. The honor God gives you is his answer to the shame levied by this world.

God honored you by sending Jesus, his own Son, to carry your shame to the cross of Calvary. God honors you by giving you new life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the one who left shame in the tomb.

God knows the three misguided responses we have to shame, and he counters them with three gifts. He honors you with them. Peter points to these gifts when he writes “your yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

God gives you relationships. You are one living stone joined to so many more in the “spiritual house” your God is building. You have a place in community because your God has placed you into his church.

God gives you responsibility. The priests of the Old Testament were set apart for a special purpose. They stood before God on behalf of their neighbors, and they lived among their neighbors as a reminder of God’s presence. This is now your role. You are made holy, which means set apart. You have the special responsibility to pray for your neighbors before God, and to be God’s presence among your neighbors day-by-day.

God gives you work. You bring “spiritual sacrifices” to God. What does that look like? Jesus told us: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39) He also said this: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20) This is your work: Love God by loving your neighbor. Love your neighbor by sharing God’s grace.

These gifts are not yours alone; they belong to your God and he chooses to share them with you. He brings you into his relationships. He shares his responsibility. He invites you alongside in his work. He gives you the honor of joining him because he has deemed you essential.

You are essential to God’s plans for your neighbors.

“So the honor is for you who believe...”

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.
Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.
Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.
Reader 2: Receive our offerings.
Together: Receive us as your own.

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing (2 Corinthians 12:14)

Reader 1: He is risen!

Reader 2: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Reader 1: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

Reader 2: ...and the love of God

Reader 1: ...and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you

Reader 2: ...and with you

Together: Amen

Reader 2: He is risen!

Reader 1: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

An Action Step

You are essential in God's plans for our neighbors. One of our neighbors is Lea's Christian School. Our Calvary members are writing notes of encouragement to students at Lea's, and you're invited to help!

If you're willing, please contact Pastor Matt. He will give you the name of a student. Have your note delivered to Calvary by Saturday, May 1.

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

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