

Sept 17-Oct 29, 2023 Sermon Summaries/In Reverse Order

Oct 8, 2023 "New Mercies Each Day"/Matt C Lamentations 3:19-27

Located in the old testament after Jeremiah book; written about 600 bc
The Babylonians have overtaken Jerusalem which lies in ruins after being invaded.

To Christ the King we give glory, we come to worship and praise and thank you for your steadfast love. Fill us with the spirit as we listen and learn.

Dare to hope in God's faithful love and mercy which begin anew each day.

1 Recognize consequences of sins.

2 Hope always; amidst pain, disappointment and/or suffering.

What do we do when we reach rough patches in our lives?

Pray? Turn to Friends/Church Community/Family? Turn to Vices?

Trust in the Lord?

The power of prayer is knowing that God is always with you. Prayer strengthens our relationship with God.

When does it seem the darkest? Psalms tell us the darker it is, the brighter the light shines. After the darkest night a new day dawns.

The author of Lamentations reflects that the thought of my suffering and homelessness makes me grieve. Yet I, the author of lamentations, still dares to hope. Embedded in his soul the author knows what to do. He remembers that the faithful love of God never ends. God's mercy never ceases and always begins afresh.

Every morning the spirit of God is in your corner. So, get up, keep going.

V 24: I say to myself the lord is my inheritance, therefore I will hope in Him.

V 25: The Lord is good to those who depend on Him or search for Him; or both.

Matt, the author of this message, plays his guitar from his heart. He doesn't want to rely on sheet music. This symbolizes his desire for all aspects of his life to rely on God. Let your gifts be God driven and directed.

In conclusion, be patient, sit quietly and wait on the Lord. Submit to the will of God. It's never too late to start to connect with God's spirit and scripture.

Be disciplined in God's ways and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

We are on a spiritual journey. Is the journey being led by goodness, the spirit and scripture? Or by other worldly things; other people, money, events? What is guiding and shaping the journey of your soul?

In John: Jesus wept. Jesus modeled sadness and grief and hope in God's eternal plan. Every morning is a new Easter morning.

**October 1, 2023 "Jesus Weighs In"/Rev. Nate B
Matthew 21:23-32, NRSV**

Paul and James debate between faith and actions. If Jesus is the door how do i get thru it on the other side . Is there a key or is the door always open? Paul believes faith is the key. James is wondering who has the key.

James believes our actions and behavior illustrates to the world if we have the key. Do we show grace, mercy and love to all around us? James is worried about folks who have the wrong key, folks that follow money and earthly possession, power and status as the keys.

In Matthew 21 Jesus tells the vineyard parable. The Religious leaders were trying to trap Jesus. Jesus turns it around on them. cuz the religious leaders were saying the right things but not doing the things, and those considered sinners were doing the right things. Jesus is saying the religious leaders were not living the word, just saying the words.

Saying the words, but not doing the work Is hypocrisy, and that is the biggest reason nonChristians don't want to go to church. If the way u r living is not of love, it loses its meaning.

Everyone is invited to God's table. Make sure our words (the word of God) are reflected in our lives and actions.

**September 24, 2023 "True Riches"/Matt C
Proverbs 22 NRSV**

Illumination Prayer: ty for today; for family, friends and church community. ty for the seasons. your steadfast love lifts us up forever.

Message Summary "True Riches

Often connect with scripture. 31 proverbs. read a chapter of proverbs each day. written by king Solomon, son of David. Proverb written app. 900 bc. Proverbs notates human patterns of behavior thru centuries.

1. A good reputation is better than earthly riches; to be held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.
2. Prudent people perceive danger and take precautions. Plan and prepare.
3. true humility and fear of the Lord lead to heavenly treasures riches and a long life. if u plant injustice you will harvest disaster. true humility x fear of God = true riches, honor and long life.
4. Corrupt people r on a thorny path.
5. Direct children on to the right paths, and they will follow it when grown.
6. Be careful with debt and loaning money.
7. Those who peddle oppression will end in disaster. God is on the throne and will reign over all.
8. Blessed r the generous. Generosity is the antidote to greed.
9. Be careful of those with whom u travel.
10. Love a pure, clean and gracious heart. Oppression and bribery will end in poverty.
11. Spread joy and be gracious. Intention matters. Gracious speech matters.
12. Align my life with God's will and plan. The Holy Spirit will guide us.
13. Make no excuses. Be led and follow when called. If the idea pops in head, u r being led.
14. Trust in the Lord always. Don't exploit the needy or rob the poor. Remember blessed are the poor, they will inherit the earth.
15. Don't cheat your neighbor. Competent workers are highly valued.
16. When tempted, run and turn away. Exercise prayer, help someone, exercise, improve the world.
17. Listen to wise words and put them in your heart. They will be ready when needed.

Live effectively
Trust God
Arm yourself in God's Truths

Be led by holy spirit

Be gracious

Spread joy

Leave positive gracious words and a gracious legacy behind.

Use your talents for good.

Your struggles can be often linked to your talents being twisted and used in sinful ways. Never take advantage of people.

Never take on the anger of others, or it can take over your soul.

Use this excuse as needed, "The bible won't let me do that." Amen!

September 17, 2023 "We Are the Church"/Rachelle C

Exodus 25: 8- 22 NRSV

Illumination Prayer

Dear creator of all seen and unseen, we lift our praises, our prayers and our songs. As Matthew 18 says ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. We feel your presence and know you are with us always. And as in Romans 13, Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light living honorably. You are ever present for us, let us be ever present for you. Amen.

The Message "We Are the Church"

Immediately after I volunteered to share this message, I questioned, "What have I done." And Sharon's response was, "3 emojis laughing with tears streaming."

I mean how hard could it be to share a message at church? Generally, when I'm driving down the street there's a sermon in my head. But, it's truly challenging to do it when others are listening. A week ago, panic set in so I began to write and hope for inspiration. And I did what most of you would do, asked friends for ideas and search the web.

To me being a Christian means to surrender, to deny myself and live and reflect the Light of Christ in what I do, say and think on some days, I think, ok, I can do this; on other days I feel like giving up. The last day I felt that way was when I found out our new pastor resigned. It was a blow to the gut and hopelessness set in fearing that this church family might not prosper and remain a source of comfort and Christian growth. And then a fellow presby reminded me of a children's rhyme. You know, "Here is the church. Here is the steeple. Open the doors and see all the people." And then she simply added, "A church is not just a pastor, it's the people." If indeed a church is the people, then where and what is the church in today's world. As my music students often asked me, "How did music start?" I wondered why humans built churches? My research took me to Exodus 25: V8- 22. Let me share those verses with you from the NRSV; (this is God speaking)

8 And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture, so, you shall make it. They shall make an ark of acacia wood; it shall be two and a half cubits long, a cubit

and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside you shall overlay it, and you shall make a molding of gold upon it all round. You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other side. You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, by which to carry the ark. The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. You shall put into the ark the covenant that I shall give you.

Then you shall make a mercy-seat of pure gold; two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its width. You shall make two cherubim of gold; you shall make them of hammered work, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. Make one cherub at one end, and one cherub at the other; of one piece with the mercy-seat you shall make the cherubim at its two ends. The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy-seat with their wings. They shall face each other; the faces of the cherubim shall be turned towards the mercy-seat. You shall put the mercy-seat on the top of the ark; and in the ark you shall put the covenant that I shall give you. There I will meet you, and from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the covenant, I will deliver to you all my commands for the Israelites.

This Ark contained a tabernacle. The tabernacle itself was to be a tent measuring ten by thirty cubits, or about fifteen by forty-five feet. Inside the tabernacle's entrance, which faced east, was the main room measuring twenty cubits, or about thirty feet, in length. This room was known as the "holy place" (Exodus 26: 33). Into this most sacred room was placed the ark of the covenant, a chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold, which measured about three feet nine inches in length and two feet three inches in height and width (see Exodus 25:10). It contained the tablets of the law given to Moses on Mount Sinai and so was a tangible reminder of God's covenant with his people. It also held a pot of manna as well as Aaron's rod that had bloomed miraculously—two other reminders of God's special blessings.

And so, Moses and Israelites carried this portable Ark of the covenant, and God dwelt and went with them wherever they roamed, commanding them as they journeyed. This little communion table is almost the size of the Ark of the Covenant, and it's draped in gold. But we don't have to carry the Ark with us to carry God. Cuz inside each of us God dwells. Someone told me as a child, my body is a temple for God. That's a lot easier than lugging a heavy box wherever I go to travel with our creator.

And, here we are, on yet another journey, waiting to return to 600 W Temple and in quest for a new leader. Our building is gone, our stuff is gone, our preacher is gone, some of our members are gone. Our security is gone. It's so easy to let the din of the world in and not focus on Jesus; to forget we carry the Light of our Savior within, the rock of our Salvation.

Remember Peter? Peter is called the rock and kept things together after Jesus ascended, then Paul took it up and together, they spread Christ's message.

We look to our pastor to be the rock, the hub reminding us to live as Christ taught. focusing on the love, the mercy and the grace of God. Instead of the matters of the soul, our spiritual journey, our default setting is to dwell in the issues of this realm; political division, our health, our children and grandchildren, what's gonna happen to our church, whatever is troubling you. Who will be our rock? Who will keep us together, now that our new minister is gone?

Can we be the rock for each other?

Can we remind each other to dwell in the teachings of Christ?

Can we allow spirit to thrive and move us and remind us to love, to forgive, to have mercy and to share our blessings?

So, where does God dwell? Here in this place? 600 W Temple, indeed our "Temple" home? In the missing Ark? Or within each of us and in the heart of every believer no matter where we wander or what life deals us?

So, if a plague prohibits public gatherings, or the building burns down, or pastor leaves; all of us, together, are God's church, the hands and feet, the body of Christ always and forever sharing and showing God's love with the whole world. Which reminds me of a children's song:

Refrain: I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!

All who follow Jesus all around the world, yes, we're the church together!

1. The church is not a building; the church is not a steeple; the church is not a resting place; the church is the people.

2. We're many kinds of people with many kinds of faces, all colors and all ages, too, from all times and places.

3. Sometimes the church is marching; sometimes it's bravely burning, sometimes it's riding, sometimes hiding; always it's learning. **Refrain**

Amen . . .