

First Presbyterian Church -- Rouses Point
Virtual Worship May 10, 2020

Greeting:

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP: O God of all creation, we gather before you in worship praying we will be empowered once more to align our lives to the teachings and life of Jesus Christ, our Cornerstone. Receive our praise and thanksgiving as expressions of faith and love, and teach us to not stray from the solid foundation of your Son, our Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

The Lord is our refuge. We can find peace in God's abiding love. When troubles assail us, we call upon the Lord. When joys abound, we call upon the Lord. Come, let us worship the Lord our God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, whose chosen dwelling is the heart that longs for your presence and humbly seeks your love, we come to you confessing our sinfulness. We have sinned against you, Lord, in thought, word, and deed. We repent of these transgressions, as well as the sin of what we have failed to do and say. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus, in whose name we pray, and by whose death and resurrection we are saved.

Amen -- ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Readings and Proclaiming God's Word

Old Testament: Psalm 31:1-5

New Testament: 1 Peter 1:23-2:10

Sermon "Jesus Our Cornerstone"

*Affirmation of faith: Apostle's Creed

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

*Benediction

SERMON SUMMARY-PS 31:1-5 & 1 PETER 1:23- 2:10

PSALM 31:2-SPEAKS ABOUT GOD AS A ROCK, A REFUGE, AND AS FORTRESS MADE OF STONE. IT IS HELPFUL TO REMEMBER THAT A ROCK OR A STONE IS A SYMBOL OF SOMETHING THAT ENDURES. IT ALSO IMPLIES STRENGTH. THE PRAYER FOR HELP IS SENT TO THE LIVING GOD WHO IS ABLE TO PROTECT, BECAUSE HIS STRENGTH IS GREATER THAN ANY FOE.

THIS BRINGS TO MIND THE MESSAGE GOD SENT TO A KING OF ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH: "...NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS."

KEEPING THIS IN MIND IT GIVES US ASSURANCE THAT A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, BUILT BY GOD IS ENDURING, EVEN BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF MORTAL EXISTENCE.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE MEANING OF THIS IS FOUND OUTSIDE A RED BRICK CHURCH LOCATED IN PENNSYLVANIA. THERE IS A GRANITE SLAB LOCATED AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE BUILDING THE HOLDS A SINGLE WORD. CARVED INTO THAT SLAB IS NOT, AS IS USUALLY THE CASE, THE DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OR THE NAME OF THE CHURCH, BUT RATHER A SINGLE WORD- "CHRIST".

THUS THE CORNERSTONE IS A REMINDER OF NOT ONLY WHO OWNS THE CHURCH AND LEADS IT, BUT ALSO OF AN ENDURANCE BEYOND THE PHYSICAL BUILDING OR THE EARTHLY EXISTENCE OF THE CONGREGATION.

JESUS IS INDEED THE CORNERSTONE OF THE CHURCH, NOT JUST THAT ONE BUILDING, OR ANY BUILDING, BUT OF THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS.

THIS IS WHY WE ARE AS MUCH, THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROUSES POINT, WHEN WE ARE WORSHIPPING IN OUR HOMES AND WHEN WE SERVE GOD IN OUR DAILY LIVES, AS WE ARE THE CHURCH WHEN GATHERED INSIDE THE CHURCH BUILDING.

AND AS THE CHURCH, PETER SUGGESTS THAT RATHER THAN FEEDING ON NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS THAT GIVE RISE TO UN-CHRIST LIKE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS, WE ARE SUPPOSE TO FEED ON THE NOURISHMENT OF GOD'S WORD, WHICH DRAWS OUR ATTENTION TO CHRIST.

TRULY, ALL WE RECEIVE FROM THE LORD IS BASED ON OUR COMING TO JESUS CHRIST. OUR FORGIVENESS, OUR NEW LIFE, OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH-OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND FRUIT THAT WE BEAR, ARE ALL MADE POSSIBLE ONLY AS WE COME TO CHRIST.

CHARLES SPURGEON REMINDED HIS CONGREGATION THAT, PEOPLE DAILY NEED TO NOURISH MORE THAN THEIR BODIES. HE SAID, CHRISTIANS NEED TO NOURISH THEIR SOULS WITH SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT. HERE IS SOME OF WHAT HE SAID:

"THE CHRISTIAN IS ALWAYS COMING TO CHRIST...COMES TODAY AND WILL COME AGAIN TOMORROW...WE COME TO JESUS DAILY, FOR CHRIST IS LIKE THE WELL OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE HOUSE. THE MAN LETS DOWN THE BUCKET AND GETS THE COOL DRAUGHT, BUT...HE WILL HAVE TO GO AGAIN...HE MUST CONSTANTLY GO TO THE SAME PLACE."

AS I'M SURE YOU NOTICED, SPURGEON'S THOUGHTS WERE INSPIRED BY PETER'S WRITING TO THE CHURCH. 1 PETER 2:4 BEGINS WITH THE CALL FOR CHRISTIANS TO "COME TO HIM", MEANING CHRIST.

OUR NEED TO COME TO CHRIST IS CONVEYED MORE FULLY IN THE ORIGINAL GREEK TEXT WHERE IT IS WRITTEN: "AS YOU COME TO CHRIST." THE IMPLICATION OF THAT PHRASE IS THAT THIS IS NOT A ONE-TIME EVENT, BUT IT IS AN ONGOING NEED AND PRACTICE.

INDEED, ALL WE RECEIVE FROM THE LORD IS BASED ON OUR COMING TO JESUS CHRIST. OUR FORGIVENESS, OUR NEW LIFE, OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH-OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND FRUIT THAT WE BEAR, ARE ALL MADE POSSIBLE ONLY AS WE COME TO CHRIST.

AND WE ARE TOLD, WHEN WE SEEK THE LORD, GOD WILL ADD US TO HIS SPIRITUAL HOUSE AS ONE OF MANY OTHER LIVING STONES. SO TOGETHER WE ARE BUILT UPON-THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND MARTYRS, WITH JESUS CHRIST AS THE LIVING AND LIFE GIVING CORNER STONE. PRAISE GOD