

## Chestnut Mountain Presbyterian, PCA

### Worship of the Living God

August 9, 2020

#### Gathering to Worship

##### Prelude

#### Welcome and Announcements

##### The Song of Ascent

*God's people sang together as they gathered and traveled together up to Jerusalem to worship God.*

##### Congregation

*Our Heart, Our Desire*

Our heart, our desire is to see our neighbors worship.

Our cry, our prayer, is they sing Your praise to the ends of the earth;

That with one mighty voice

Ev'ry tribe and tongue rejoices.

Our heart, our desire is to see our neighbors worship You.

Our heart, our desire is to see the na-tions worship.

Our cry, our prayer, is to sing Your praise to the ends of the earth;

That with one mighty voice

Ev'ry tribe and tongue rejoices.

Our heart, our desire is to see the na-tions worship You.

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#### Adoration of God

##### Call to Worship:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" - Romans 8.14-15

#### Quieting of Hearts, Confession of Sin and Invocation

##### Declaring Our Faith:

Leviticus 26.12-13; Philemon 4-16

Pastor: And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

All: *I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.*

Pastor: For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.



**All:** *Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)*

**Pastor:** I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.

**All:** *For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.*

**Hymn of Praise**                      *Amazing Love*  
My Lord, what love is this- that pays so dearly;  
That I, the guilty one may go free.

**Refrain:**  
*Amazing love, O what sacrifice, The Son of God, giv'n for me;  
My debt He pays and my death He dies,  
That I might live, that I might live.*

And so they watched Him die; despised, rejected;  
But O, the blood He shed flowed for me.

And now this love of Christ shall flow like rivers;  
Come wash your guilt away, live again.  
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**CMPC Mission and Family Life**  
**Mission Moment**  
**Pastoral Prayer**

**Our Gifts to God**  
**Receiving God's Tithes and Our Offering**  
*The Doxology*  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him, all creatures here below.  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Hymn of Testimony**                      *Facing a Task Unfinished*  
*(Children ages 3 through kindergarten may be escorted to Children's Church)*



Facing a task unfinished That drives us to our knees-  
A need that, undiminished Rebukes our slothful ease.  
We, who rejoice to know Thee Renew before Thy throne  
The solemn pledge we owe Thee To go and make Thee known.

Where other lords beside Thee Hold their unhindered sway-  
Where forces that defied Thee Defy Thee still today  
With none to heed their crying For life, and love, and light,  
Unnumbered souls are dying And pass into the night.

Refrain: *We go to all the world  
With kingdom hope unfurled.  
No other name has power to save  
But Jesus Christ The Lord!*

We bear the torch that flaming Fell from the hands of those  
Who gave their lives proclaiming That Jesus died and rose.  
Ours is the same commission, The same glad message ours,  
Fired by the same ambition, To Thee we yield our powers.

O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired,  
Savior, whose love constrained them To toil with zeal untired,  
From cowardice defend us, From lethargy awake!  
Forth on Thine errands send us To labor for Thy sake.

### **Proclaiming the Word of God**

#### **Reading of God's Word**

Colossians 3.22-4.1

<sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. <sup>22</sup> Bondservants (or, slaves), obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your bondservants (or, slaves) justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

#### **Prayer of Illumination**

#### **Sermon**

Pastor John

*The Bible Says What? The Daily Application of Finding Our Identity in Christ (4)*  
Series from Colossians: *Finding Our Identity in Christ*

#### **Our Response**

#### **Prayer of Application**

#### **Hymn of Response**

*O Jesus I Have Promised*

O Jesus, I have promised

To serve Thee to the end;



Be Thou forever near me,      My Master and my Friend;  
I shall not fear the battle      If Thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway      If Thou wilt be my Guide.

Oh, let me feel Thee near me;      The world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle,      The tempting sounds I hear;  
My foes are ever near me,      Around me and within;  
But, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,      And shield my soul from sin.

Oh, let me hear Thee speaking,      In accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion,      The murmurs of self-will;  
Oh, speak to reassure me,      To hasten, or control;  
Oh, speak, and make me listen,      Thou Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, Thou hast promised      To all who follow Thee  
That where Thou art in glory      There shall Thy servant be;  
And Jesus, I have promised      To serve Thee to the end;  
Oh, give me grace to follow,      My Master and my Friend.

Oh, let me see Thy footmarks,      And in them plant mine own;  
My hope to follow duly      Is in Thy strength alone.  
Oh, guide me, call me, draw me,      Uphold me to the end;  
And then to rest receive me,      My Savior and my Friend.

*Words by John Bode, 1866, written when his three covenant children became members of the church.  
Music by Aubrey Mann, 1881*

### **The Benediction and Threefold Amen**



## Chestnut Mountain Presbyterian, PCA

cmpca.org

### CMPC Sermon Notes for August 9, 2020

- **Series-** *Colossians: Finding Our Identity in Christ*
- **Message:** *The Bible Says What? The Daily Application of Finding Our Identity in Christ (4)*
  - Colossians 3.18-21

#### Why doesn't Paul/the Bible condemn slavery?

- There is sometimes disappointment, sometimes embarrassment, and often uncertainty as to why Paul does not vigorously attack slavery
- The elephant in the room as Paul writes to the Colossian Church on how our identity in Christ impacts our most basic relationships
- Translation of the word *doulos*: slave, bond-servant, or servant depending on context, but most often slave
  - ESV: originally translated it almost always as a slave; later editions of the ESV change it in most cases to bond-servants.

#### The Slavery Background

- The mark of a fallen world
  - Forcing others to do your work
  - Since 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC
  - Israel in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium was enslaved by the Egyptians
- First century
  - 30% of the people were slaves; some cities' higher
  - Economics or captives of war, not race
  - Pirates also roamed the Mediterranean: would capture people & them away from their homeland & sell them.
  - Some slaves could obtain freedom
- Plight varied as to where you served
  - Mining and agriculture
  - Urban- better circumstances
  - All occupations
  - All: as slaves, had no rights, sub-human
- Considered as property
  - Some slaves in first century were treated humanely
    - Masters would try to maximize the service of the slave, & sometimes humane treatment was the best
  - But many slaves were abused
  - BUT: Never right to own another human being
  - 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century slavery based on race was horrific, repugnant, and sinful

#### Onesimus' plight as a runaway slave emphasizes the precarious state of a slave

- Runaway to Rome
  - Evidently stole from Philemon
  - Always fearful, looking over his shoulder
    - Bounty hunters looking for runaway slaves
- Only way to really safely return to Colossae would be with an escort like Tychicus

- Legally, Philemon could have: beaten him, broken his legs to remind him to never run away again, branded his face, forced him to wear an iron collar around his neck, sold him into agricultural or mining, had him imprisoned, or had him executed

### Paul on Slavery

- Writing to the Galatians (3.28), about @49AD: In Christ, we are neither slave nor free
  - Only two groups of people for Paul: the saved and the unsaved
- Writing to the Corinthians, about @55AD (I Corinthians 7.21)- a slave should obtain freedom if they can: manumission. Usually meant paying off incurred debt. Also could come at master's kindness or death.
  - A "problem" in the latter part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD with too many slaves being released
- Ephesians and Colossians: Philemon, @60AD
  - Given Paul's positions on equality IN the church, how does that work in a culture where inequality is ingrained?
- Some Christian slaves sitting there who have unbelieving Masters
- Some Christians masters sitting there who have unbelieving slaves
- Possible: some Christian master & their Christian slaves are both present

### Onesimus meets with Philemon

- Onesimus returns with Tychicus and letters to the churches
  - Philemon a hospitable man, a refreshing man
  - Onesimus has been converted
    - Paul is his spiritual father
    - Has been serving Paul
- Formerly Useless, now living up to name, Useful
  - A beloved brother
  - Paul: I will make right
- Receive him: you owe me your live
  - By implication: release him
- Gospel model: The reconciliation of a disloyal slave with his master as brothers in Christ recasts all relationships and reflects Christ's reconciliation of all things.

### In Colossians 3

- A word to slaves who are present
  - Again, not necessarily their masters who are sitting there.
- Paul treats them as people by speaking to them
- Obey... but with a new identity in Christ
  - Sets them free from pleasing their master to pleasing God
  - From the heart
  - Fearing the Lord
    - Mindset: The reality is that in Christ, you are serving Christ, not other human beings
- Eye-service is all about external obedience, not the heart
  - Our inheritance in Christ: our real reward
  - This frees the slave to do everything his master asks- because Christ is Lord, not the earthly master
  - Verse 23 is a whole change in perspective that truly sets people free. Yes, you may be exploited by an earthly master, but our real payment comes from Jesus.
  - Verse 25 addresses both the worker who does not properly do his/her work, AND the Master who does not properly reward the worker



- 4.1 is shocking to everyone: that Masters have responsibilities when it comes to how they treat slaves: YOU have a Master!
- So what was Paul doing?
  - First, his main concern is everyone's relationship with the Lord
    - It is only by learning to serve the Lord that we can begin to come to proper terms with each other.
    - Both slave and master have a Lord in heaven
  - The world cannot tackle social problems this way, but the church cannot preach the Kingdom of God without talking about the King
    - Paul emphasizes eternity more than the present
    - The Christian slave now asks: is my work meeting my master's needs
    - The Master MUST ask: is my slave getting his proper reward?
  - In other words, the gospel changes the heart
    - Paul is not addressing the leaders of society, but rather the church.
    - Paul's great concern is with the present as he writes this letter: how do they deal with their present problems and present dangers
    - The glory of the gospel is that it has something to give in the worst situations we experience. It is possible to live victoriously despite our circumstances.
- Paul set the slaves free now
  - He also laid down principles that would ultimately undermine slavery.
    - Took too long.
    - Tragically some Christians throughout history abused the verses to support slavery.
  - Christians led the way in eliminating slavery; still today

### ***So What About Us?***

- Paul did not overtly challenge the slavery system, but neither did he sanctify it as part of God's design (as he did with marriage and the parent/child relationship). Instead, he focuses on how conversion fundamentally transforms personal relationships with others and with God. He laid down universal principles that, when taken seriously, ultimately toppled the foundations of injustice in any form.
  - That racial slavery continued until the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a tragedy.
    - That some Christians twisted scripture in support of slavery is unacceptable.
- How could Philemon find a better way to show that Onesimus was more than a slave- a true brother in Christ- than by releasing him?
- As many as 27 million people today are enslaved, primarily for sex trafficking
- We should not view any human being as being lesser than ourselves- we must root any racism out of our hearts.
- The unfinished task we face is to reach all the peoples; the nations, and the downtrodden
- The unfinished task we face is for justice to roll down like a river