

Alexandra Presbyterian Church

Third Sunday of Easter

April 18, 2021

Minister: Rev. Vern Tozer
Stephanie Burgoyne, music director
Kaitlin Vandertuin, soprano

GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER

*** Entry of God's Word, our Holy Bible**

PRELUDE

“Andante Tranquillo”

P. Whitlock

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we may be called the children of God. As a father cares for his children, so the Lord shows his loving care towards us. Let us come as daughters and sons to sit at His table where we will receive food to nourish our souls. There is a place prepared for us.

HYMN 96

Let Us With a Gladsome Mind

*** PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION**

Eternal God, how blessed we are to be able to gather in your name and in your presence for this time of worship. You are here and your ear is open to our praise and our prayers. Bless us according to our needs this day. Speak through your Word and give us attentive minds and receptive hearts. We confess how unworthy we are. We often listen to what you want of us and then go and do the opposite. So very often we have to say that we are sorry. Give the strength and courage to follow you more closely. We ask in the name of the one who has taught his family to pray together saying—

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

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.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

We give thanks O Lord that you forgive all who come with repentant hearts and seek your forgiveness. If we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 8

- ¹ O LORD, our God,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
Your splendor is chanted above the heavens
- ² by the mouths of babes and infants
**you have set up a defense against your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.**
- ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
- ⁴ **what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?**
- ⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than the angels,
and crowned them with glory and honor.
- ⁶ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands,
you have put all things under their feet
- ⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
- ⁸ **the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.**
- ⁹ O LORD, our God,
how majestic is your name in all the earth

"May the Lord bless the reading of His word to our hearts."

SCRIPTURES

2 Samuel 9:1-11

HYMN 709

Come let us sing

MEDITATION

“What a name”

The name I am going to share with you today comes from the Old Testament days. The name is Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth — know anybody with that name? See if you can remember it when I come back to it in a couple of minutes. It was during the time when King David was on the throne. There was a long period between the time when David was chosen by Samuel to be the new king and the day when he actually received the crown. There was much turmoil and a great deal of bloodshed. Israel's first king was Saul and he did not want to give up the throne. He had been chosen because he was a man who looked like a king. He was very tall and good looking. Whenever you saw him you would agree he would make a good king. Choosing someone to be a leader just because of his looks is nothing new. But Saul did not work out very well. He began to do things that people questioned. In fact before he finally died in battle you would have to agree that Saul had serious mental issues. We are told that David got to live at the palace or nearby, because when Saul flew into one of his mad rages, David could play the harp and Saul would calm down. I suppose you could say that David was like a prescription of Valium for Saul.

Saul had several children and you would expect that one of his sons would succeed him on the throne. But that was not to be. We read that Saul was rejected by God before he passed away. That is why Samuel had anointed a new king. But one of Saul's sons, whose name was Jonathan, became very good friends with King David; which, is somewhat of a surprise because as we mentioned, it would ordinarily be assumed that Jonathan would become king when his father finally ceased to be king.

As part of their friendship, David and Jonathan made a pledge to each other. They lived in very dangerous times and they knew their futures would be very uncertain. So they agreed that if one of them survived the other, they would show kindness and caring towards the descendants of the other. You should know that there was something else that usually happened whenever members of the royal family survived the king. The one who took over as king usually always wiped out all the survivors of the other. They did this so there would be nobody around who might gather up followers and challenge the new king.

David's friend Jonathan was killed at the same time as his father in a battle. It took some time for David to get things settled down after he took over the throne. With all the mess that Saul left behind you know it would not be easy to get the kingdom properly organized. But then came the day when David was able to take a deep breath and look after some loose ends. He called a faithful, long serving man whose name was Ziba, and asked him a question. “Could you tell me if there are any descendants of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?”

Ziba had worked for Saul and he knew. He told David about a son of Jonathan who was alive. His name was Mephibosheth. And right away Ziba added — he is a cripple — in both legs. Why did he mention that right away? I think likely because he was saying he is no threat to you your majesty. He could never raise an army and lead it in battle. Mephibosheth was summoned to the castle. Poor fellow he was probably shaking with fear. What in the world could the king want to see me for? Maybe he will get rid of me. One of the first things that David says to him is — “don't be afraid i will surely show you kindness for the same of your father Jonathan.” Mephibosheth's fear changed to shock.

David promised to give this poor cripple the land his father had owned. And then the most amazing thing of all David said – “You will come and always eat at my table.” Talk about winning a lottery. No more concerns about how he would live. He would be part of the royal family. Here is what Mephibosheth blurts out “What is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?” And in addition David guaranteed that Mephibosheth would have all the help needed to farm the land he was being given and he would have his own private servant.

And so it happened that from then on Mephibosheth lived and ate like a prince. He always sat at the king’s table for the remainder of his life. Unbelievable story? What a change for the man who at five years of age was dropped by his nurse as she fled from danger. Life would never be the same. He would have such a wonderful relationship with the king. And it was not because of his doing—but because of his father and because of the kindness of David.

I like to apply this story to each of us. The bible says that David was great because he was a man after god’s own heart. What David did is a grand picture of what grace is. Grace is showing unbelievable favour to the undeserving. It is doing for another, what they could never do for themselves. Because of David’s grace towards Mephibosheth he was freed from a life of helpless poverty to live with the king. His name might mean “one who scatters shame” but now it refers to one who lives with the king. What had he done to deserve this? Nothing. Could he ever afford to pay for the luxury of living with the king? Certainly not? Was he to sit at the king’s table for a few years? No he would be there for his whole life.

I hope you can see how we can use this story to describe what our Lord has done for the human race. On our own and as we come into this world we are slaves to things that hinder and cripple us. We live without hope that things could ever better. We may feel worthless—or even describe ourselves as Mephibosheth described himself — “a dead dog”. But then there is the invitation of the King of Kings — come to me—believe in me — accept the grace I offer. And the picture changes in an amazing way. It is almost unbelievable — too good to be true. David’s action could be compared in some ways with what our Lord has done. David did it because he loved this cripple so many shunned. Jesus did what he did because he loved and cared for us.

And when his invitation is accepted, we know that one day we will sit with him in glory. We shall take part in the great bridal feast of the king of glory. Amazing grace – that is what it is.

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

PRESENTATION OF OFFERING

*** 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.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Our heavenly Father, you are a giving Father, and we have all been blessed by what you have given to us so freely. Thank you for enriching our lives with food, clothing and shelter – all the daily gifts that we need in order to live. We wish to present these gifts as a sign of our thankfulness. Receive and use these gifts so that others may be blessed. We ask in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

PRAYERS THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Our loving Father and our God, we come now in quietness and thankfulness to share our thoughts with you. We praise you for your many blessings that gladden our days. You pour out blessings not according to what we deserve but according to your great love for us. We rejoice that you do not merely give us what we deserve or else we would be struggling to live. We thank you for the daily food you provide for our bodies and our souls. We offer praise for those who share our lives with us. We bless your name that you place us on this earth in families and surrounded by people who love us.

This morning, our Father, we realize that we should pray for others. And so we bring before you the needs of our city, our country and our world. We ask for blessing on those who are suffering because of illness. Minister to them and heal them according to your will. Give your guidance to those who diagnose their problems; prescribe treatment and perform the operations. Bless doctors and nurses who become your hands in healing. Into your continuing care we remember the many that are cut off from the people they love because they are in a nursing home. Watch over them O Lord as they are confused and questioning the things they cannot understand.

We also bring before you the many, many people who have had to flee from their homes because of war or persecution. Hold them close and hasten the day when they will be able to feel at home in another place. Give encouragement and help to the people who work with missions who do their best to care for these displaced persons.

We pray for our brothers and sisters in the faith who are being punished because of what they believe. Grant that they may not grow weary but find their strength renewed every morning. Uphold those who preach the good news.

Loving Master, we all have personal matters—requests that are dear to our hearts. In a moment of silence we now whisper that need, that person, that situation, that concern..... All these things we ask with confidence in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom is all praise now and evermore. Amen.

HYMN 670

Amazing Grace

*** BENEDICTION**

*** CHORAL AMEN**

POSTLUDE

“Minuet”

A. Hollins

In Our Prayers

Edith Cowper
Bruce Wheatley
Jeannie Carmichael
Joan MacQueen