

Penns Valley Charge U.M.C. Worship Service for Sunday, August 16, 2020

Facebook live Scripture & message only 8:30am - Phone/online Family Worship 9:45am
Find link on PennsValleyParish.info or call 1-708-713-5876, then enter the PIN: 992 148 847#

Those without long distance service may be called into worship, contact Pastor Theresa.

Weekly messages will also be available by phone 24/7 at 814-422-6238.

Pastor Theresa M. Heiser; theiser@susumc.org; 814-883-9510; PO Box 211, Centre Hall 16828

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Last Summer Book Club gathering is Aug. 19 at St. James starting at 7pm. Bring your book and anything you require to enjoy the time together including a lawn chair and water/soda/etc.
- Ladies Coffee & Conversation at St. James Aug. 20 starting at 9:30am.
- Pastor Theresa is on vacation August 24-30. Pastor Valerie Delooze will serve urgent pastoral needs. Pastor Valerie's phone number is 814-880-2367.

OPENING PRAYER **Eternal God, part the veil that blinds us to our unity as your beloved children. When those we love hurt and betray us, help us let go of our pain and find the balm of forgiveness. When we feel abandoned by those we trust, help us seek your peace and reconciliation. When our hearts are pierced with anguish, help us find those who bring us solace, through your loving Spirit. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE **Dancing for God** Based on 2 Samuel 6:1-19

Verse of the month: Psalm 100:1 *"Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth!"*

PASTORAL PRAYER

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Genesis 45:1-15

MESSAGE The Last Word: God Empowers Us to Forgive

COMMISSION & BLESSING

Join us after worship for a small group study!

This Week's Study: To The Lost Sheep

Read Matthew 15:10-28 and Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Who are the people or groups of people named in the Matthew 15 passage? [Jesus, crowds, disciples, Pharisees, Peter, a Canaanite woman, her daughter.] Which of these groups or people, from an ancient Israelite perspective, would have had the most religious clout or credibility?

Who would have had the least? [The Pharisees would likely have had the most, and the Canaanite woman and her daughter would have had the least; they were not even Israeli.]

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus repeatedly articulated that his mission centered on the Israelites (Matthew 10:5, 15:24). However, there are examples like this story that indicate a widening of the mission (see also Matthew 8:5-13). These foreshadow the Great Commission, which will declare the all-encompassing scope of the mission (Matthew 28:16-20). Read the passage again, having participants place themselves in the story as the disciples. How surprising would Jesus' words about the Pharisees (v. 14) have been?

How shocking would Jesus' words about the Canaanite woman have been in verse 28? *[The contradiction is startling. Jesus rebukes the religious leaders (Pharisees) and exalts the faith of a Gentile woman!]*

What might this reveal about Jesus? *[Jesus extends grace and compassion to those (like the Canaanite woman) that others thought were not worthy of God's grace.]*

How might Jesus' question in verse 24 be ironic? *[Perhaps it is Israel that is, in fact, lost.]*

In the Romans passage, Paul is disputing Gentile Roman Christians who are tempted to act superior to Jewish Christians (and Jews in general). Paul will have none of it. As verses 30-31 make clear, just as Gentile Christians are allowed into the covenant family through God's mercy, that same mercy extends to all Jews. It is part of God's nature to extend mercy. What do these passages (both from Matthew and Romans) teach us about the extent of God's mercy and grace?

How is it both reassuring and challenging that God's mercy and grace are all-encompassing? *[While it might be easy to consider God showing mercy to us, it might seem near impossible for God to show mercy to others. On the flip side, for some it might seem easier to comprehend God showing mercy to others, but hard to imagine (knowing what we know about ourselves) that God could extend mercy to us.]*

CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful God, your grace and mercy are so abundant that it is often hard to imagine or comprehend. Thankfully, we do not have to understand it but are called to live in light of your grace and mercy. Likewise, even when it goes against our inclinations and tendencies, empower us to extend the compassionate hand of mercy to those we meet. Amen.