

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2023 05 21

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... and also with you. Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield.

Announcements

The people of Knox Bayfield acknowledge with gratitude the territory upon which we live, work, play and worship. We live on the traditional lands of the Chippewa and Haudenosaunee, 'People of the Longhouse,' Anishinabewaki, Attiwonderonk (Neutral), and Mississauga peoples within Treaty 29, of 1827. We are all treaty people. We recognize the harm incurred through colonization and we acknowledge that The Presbyterian Church in Canada was a part of the residential school system. We affirm the 94 Calls to Action, refute the Doctrine of Discovery, and accept the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There is much for us to learn. We commit to growing in healthy relationship, one based in truth, respect, and reconciliation, with the First Nations of this land.

Special Music My Lord, What a Mornin' Linda Street, Soloist

African-American Spiritual; Arr. Harry T. Burleigh; Rev 8:10

Call To Worship

One We have been called to work in the kingdom of God here on earth. We have been called to follow the example set before us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

All We confess that we have not always followed Him in the way we should, and seek His forgiveness in earnest prayer.

One We who are called the children of God rely on His promise that those who believe and repent will receive a pardon from our heavenly Father.

All We who follow in the footsteps of our Lord, worship and adore our God in truth and thankfulness for His mercy and grace toward us.

One We are thankful this morning for those who have gone on before us, for those who have laid the foundations of our Christian faith for our lives, and those who have nurtured us in the maturity of that faith we share together in Christ.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. And also with you.

Hymn Amazing Grace (v 1-2) #670

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination and Scripture<sup>1</sup>

Your Word, O God, comes to us in the translation of ancient scripture. Send your Holy Spirit to open our minds with understanding and our hearts with wisdom in the name of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture

Gospel

Luke 5:1-11

[B#62/W#64]

May God bless our understanding of this, God's holy word. The word of the Lord.

Special Music I See the Love of God in Every River

Linda Street, Soloist

Failure is nothing more than a chance at a new beginning!

Failure, even the word itself can cause fear to overtake your sensibilities; it is the summation of everything that is an unwanted curse in your life. For most people even the thought of failure is devastating, and yet failure is nothing more than a chance at a new beginning. Failure can cause some to doubt that they will ever be able to succeed again and the anxiety it causes, does not allow them to start again to rebuild or repair what went wrong.

All through the bible we read the stories of those who failed and those who found their new beginning in Christ. Maybe you remember his story? He was given an inheritance; he was a member of the family. We know he squandered every penny on wild living and bad choices. The frivolous road he had sought to travel dead ended in a pig pen. He had been reduced to feeding the pigs, and as hunger gnawed at his being the pods that were meant for the pigs became his dinner. Then suddenly something inside of him awoke and he remembered how things at home had been and he said "I will arise and go to my Father".

He did not expect to be restored to his original status in the family, but his Father just as our Father in heaven wants to restore us to our original place and status according to His plan for us, a plan that was brought to fruition on an old Roman rugged cross. Landing in a pig pen stinks, but to stay there is stupid. We can't change yesterday but we are in charge of tomorrow. Put God's plan for your life in place today and experience where a new tomorrow will lead you.

Even though we might not be in the same boat as the prodigal, many find ourselves in the same boat as Peter the apostle. In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke we come upon Peter after a night of fishing with nothing more to show for it than a weary and disappointed being. Along

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<sup>1</sup> Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

comes Jesus who wants to distance himself from the multitude that was pressing around him on the beach and asks Peter to take Him out a little way from shore in order to address the crowd.

When Jesus had finished speaking He turned to Peter and said “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch”. I don’t know about you but I can almost hear the sigh of disbelief as Peter answers “Master we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at your word I will let down the net”. What was Peter thinking? I am sure Peter’s thoughts must have considered that if he did this and if they caught nothing, than this would be nothing short of dreaded public failure. Being in a state of exhaustion and wondering if Jesus really knew anything about fishing the level of doubt and the fear of failing must have weighed heavily on his mind. For many this scenario is not so strange for in their state of weariness, loneliness and bitterness, the word of God seems to be the last thing on their minds. It seems that so often people choose to live in the misery of defeat rather than in the victory promised in the words of the apostle John when He said “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world- our faith.”

It is no secret that our faith is continually tested, it is tested when a job is lost or a relationship ends in divorce, it is tested as the financial security you counted on is lost and it is tested as we stand at the graveside of a loved one, it is at these trying times we must rely on verse 6 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”. There is a wonderful truth in the words of that line for often we find it hard to follow God in those circumstances; but since goodness and mercy describe the very being of God it is at those times that we can rely on the fact that it is God who follows us.

No one has a greater knowledge of what we need or when we need it than our creator God; and it is He who follows us into the depths of our darkest times in order to bring the light of His love to shine into our soul. He offers us the living water to quench our spiritual thirst. The light illuminates the beauty that has been planned for us, the living water keeps us buoyant in those times when we are about to sink or have sunk into despair. Goodness and mercy, God had followed the Samaritan woman at the well when Jesus said to her “give me a drink”. We know from reading her story that she had her share of relationship failures and that she was shunned by the other women causing her to come to the well in

2023 05 21

the scorching heat of the day. It seems when our situations in life heat up to where they are unbearable it is then that our God shows up and we hear the words “fear not for I am with you” and we know from her responses to Jesus’ questions that she had felt the sting of failure in her life. I love the way that Jesus does not pass judgement on her; rather he commends her for being truthful and offers her the living water of new beginnings.

Age is not a factor as to whether we can have a new beginning; we are never too old as attested to by the story of Moses. Moses was a man of considerable age when God followed him and called him to the burning bush. Moses argued and protested as we ourselves often do when we are called by God to step up to the plate, doubting that we could hit one out of the park. Again we know the story, we were witnesses to the plagues, we saw the sea open up; we saw God follow the Israelites with a pillar of fire at night so they could see and a cloud during the day to shield them from the glaring sun. What we see in the story of Moses is that regardless of age, wealth, gender or status no matter how much we may protest God leads us through the desert of failure to the oasis of victory.

There is no avoiding the darkness at certain times in our lives, but isn’t it good to know that we do not have to face it alone? Jonah experienced the darkness as he sat in the belly of the whale for the failure of doing God’s will. Jonah knew where to turn as we see him praying to God for the light of life to be restored to him. It is at those times when we feel like we are in the belly of the whale that we need to be in prayerful conversation with our God. Just as God did not hold Jonah’s failure against him, neither will our God hold our failures against us and thus stopping Him from rescuing us from that dark place whatever or wherever that might be?

As you read the book of Job you are faced with the woes that he suffered and the obstacles he endured during those struggles as he listened to those who wanted him to give up. As often as we are faced with tough times and the world seems to be a forbidding place, friends or supposed friends like to chime in with their words of wisdom; but we must be careful for their wisdom is not God’s wisdom. When we are tempted to adhere to the advice of others we leave little room to listen to the helper that God has sent to each of us the Holy Spirit.

There is a story I heard many years ago about a young boy on a little league baseball team that I thought might aptly describe this message. The boy had been on the team for a couple of years and as a player he was mediocre at best. Then in the middle of the season

2023 05 21

his father passed away and everyone because they were feeling sorry for him thought, maybe they should not play him in order to let him grieve. The boy went to his coach and begged him to let him go up to bat and the coach after some consideration agreed. The boy went up to the plate and with the first pitch swung as hard as he could sending the ball over the fence. The coach was astounded and asked the boy about the difference in his batting ability; the boys reply was simple, "My father came to every one of my games and sat in the bleachers but he had been blind since birth, today as he watches me from heaven will be the first time he has seen me play. We are often surrounded by those who give advice when in truth they cannot see clearly or at all what is going on in our life. But we can rest assured that our heavenly father sees clearly all that is happening in our lives and no one cheers louder than Him when we slide into Home plate safely.

Failure is not final it just means you have not succeeded yet. The apostle Peter had a long list of failures when it came to being faithful, often he would let his exuberance stand in the way of his better judgement like cutting of the ear of one of those who had come to arrest Jesus. His doubt would leave him sinking into the water, his fear would have him deny the lord he had sworn allegiance too, his unbelief or misunderstanding would have him hiding in the upper room afraid of the authorities, failure had followed him like the rain from a cloudy sky. Life had not been easy, these must have been the thoughts nagging at him as he walked along the beach, shoulders stooped in the shame he thought he would have to bear alone.

As he looked into the distance he saw a familiar figure sitting by a small fire on the beach ahead; instantly he recognized that it was Jesus. As Peter approaches Jesus he is invited to have breakfast for on the fire were some fishes that were almost ready to eat. There is no condemnation on Jesus' part he simply asks "Peter do you love me?" three times and each time the answer is an emphatic yes. Jesus tells Peter to go and feed His lambs. Even with his past failures and even with our past failures Jesus wants to have breakfast with us, He wants to feed us that bread of life that will not leave us hungering for the worldly things which will only leave us walking stooped over in shame because of our failures. How wonderful it must be to one day to sit at that table that has been prepared for us in heaven when we can have breakfast with Jesus.

The next time when the thought of your failures get you down I urge you to remember that like Peter Like the Woman at the well and like Moses and Jonah you are in the

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2023 05 21

company of the forgiven, you are in the company of the saints who knew what failure was and how the God of creation sees past our mistakes and welcomes us anyway. Failure as I stated in my title is nothing more than a chance at a new beginning and when we entrust that new beginning to our God; can success be far behind? God is watching us knowing that no matter what; He is ready to help us put the pieces of our shattered lives back together again. Amen

Prayer

Lord we approach you with all our successes and all our failings this morning and ask that you would help us to make sense of them. We come asking that you would feed us with the bread of life and the living water so that spiritual hunger or thirst will not befall us. Grant us this day the wisdom to allow your Holy Spirit to lead us in our search for answers to life's difficult questions as we try to live lives dedicated to Your service. These things we ask in the name of He who invites us to breakfast along the seashore our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Amen

Hymn Softly and Tenderly (v 1-2) #640

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour. Not a dead-end street. Abraham Lincoln

Doxology We give Thee but Thine own, What e'er the gift may be; All that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee.

Prayers of the People, Blessing of Gifts, Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallow'ed 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn Great is the Faithfulness (v 1-2) #324

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

Postlude Amen