

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

20th Sunday After Pentecost – October 15^h, 2023

Prelude: by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and Talbotstreet.ca

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: How could we ever tell how good our God is?

People: **What would we say? How would we move into such praise? How would it feel to be there together with such joy?**

Eric: Bring every joy. Come with every bit of delight.

People: **Gather it all in this pleasing, commendable, and worthy of excellence. Praise God!**

Eric: How could we live into God's love?

People: **We could rejoice and shout. We could jump and sing.**

Eric: We could tell the truth and hold space for every emotion.

People: **Yes! This is what we praise.**

Eric: Praise God, who gathers us together.

Opening Hymn: VU 660 "How Firm a Foundation"

How firm a foundation, you servants of God,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent word!
What more can be said than to you has been said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

'Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed!
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen and help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous omnipotent hand.

'When through the deep waters I call you to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

'When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply:
the flame shall not hurt you; I only design
your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.

'The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not - I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never - no, never - no, never forsake!' **

Opening Prayer:

People: We might not all come with praise. Joy might be furthest from our hearts. Anger, sadness, and anxiety might mingle here too. O God, you make space for it all. Bring us together today to experience the fullness of your steadfast love. May we find your grace holding us close, now and always. Amen.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: "Do Lord"

I have a home in Glory land that outshines the sun,
I have a home in Glory land that outshines the sun,
I have a home in Glory land that outshines the sun,
Way beyond the blue,

*Do Lord, O do Lord, O do remember me,
Do Lord, O do Lord, O do remember me,
Do Lord, O do Lord, O do remember me,
Way beyond the blue.*

I took Jesus as my saviour, you take him too,
I took Jesus as my saviour, you take him too,
I took Jesus as my saviour, you take him too,
While he's calling you, R **

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 106: 1 – 6, 19 - 23

We will celebrate and praise you, Lord! You are good to us, and your love never fails.

No one can praise you enough for all the mighty things you have done.

You bless those people who are honest and fair in everything they do.

Remember me, Lord, when you show kindness by saving your people.

Let me prosper with the rest of your chosen ones, as they celebrate with pride because they belong to you.

We and our ancestors have sinned terribly.

At Horeb your people made and worshiped the statue of a bull, instead of you, their glorious God.

You worked powerful miracles to save them from Egypt, but they forgot about you and the fearsome things you did at the Red Sea.

You were angry and started to destroy them, but Moses, your chosen leader, begged you not to do it.

Hebrew Scripture: Exodus 32: 1 - 14

After the people saw that Moses had been on the mountain for a long time, they went to Aaron and said, "Make us an image of a god who will lead and protect us. Moses brought us out of Egypt, but nobody knows what has happened to him." Aaron told them, "Bring me the gold

earrings that your wives and sons and daughters are wearing.” Everybody took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron, then he melted them and made an idol in the shape of a young bull. All the people said to one another, “This is the god who brought us out of Egypt!” When Aaron saw what was happening, he built an altar in front of the idol and said, “Tomorrow we will celebrate in honor of the Lord.” The people got up early the next morning and killed some animals to be used for sacrifices and others to be eaten. Then everyone ate and drank so much that they began to carry on like wild people. The Lord said to Moses: Hurry back down! Those people you led out of Egypt are acting like fools. They have already stopped obeying me and have made themselves an idol in the shape of a young bull. They have bowed down to it, offered sacrifices, and said that it is the god who brought them out of Egypt. Moses, I have seen how stubborn these people are, and I'm angry enough to destroy them, so don't try to stop me. But I will make your descendants into a great nation. Moses tried to get the Lord God to change his mind: Our Lord, you used your mighty power to bring these people out of Egypt. Now don't become angry and destroy them. If you do, the Egyptians will say that you brought your people out here into the mountains just to get rid of them. Please don't be angry with your people. Don't destroy them! Remember the solemn promise you made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You promised that someday they would have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky and that you would give them land. So even though the Lord had threatened to destroy the people, he changed his mind and let them live.

Reflection: “A Day of Emotions”

Last Sunday was Thanksgiving Sunday and we shared about all the blessing God has given us and to be thankful. But what about those times when we falter in our faith, the moments when our fear, however small, prevails over our instincts to do good.

This morning's story from Exodus, we find the people are camped near Mount Sinai. Moses has gone with his assistant Joshua to meet with God up in the mountain. Moses has left his brother Aaron and nephew Hur in charge of the camp. Moses and Joshua are gone for 40 days and 40 nights – a biblical number symbolic of birth, rebirth, and change. While they are away, the people get restless and make demands on Aaron. They once again are wondering where God is. They seek assurance of God's presence, but in the form of idols from nature-religions of the ancient Near East with which they would have been familiar and comfortable. The golden calf was an image of strength and virility, common in religions of that area – it was meant to soothe their troubled hearts.

Moses returns from the mountain to the camp to find the Golden Calf being used for worship. Four things become clear as a result of the encounter with God that follows. First, God pays attention: God is frustrated with the behaviour of these chosen people, calling them perverse, stiff-necked, and disobedient. Second, God is being changed: it's clear from the interaction with Moses that God can be

influenced. Third, God seeks relationship: Moses is remembered as the prophetic leader who had a direct and dynamic relationship with God. They argue, they commiserate, they cajole, they rant, and they care. A healthy relationship with the holy can include all that and much more. Fourth, God loves: perhaps God's anger, judgment, and repentance are all grounded in the reality that the creation is beloved of God. As an example we can think of a parent and how they raise their children.

In the story of the golden calf, Moses stands between God and the rest of the community – whom God and Moses are not pleased with. Moses repairs the broken trust on both sides, calling God and the people back into covenant.

The people of Israel encountered issues of leadership choices and vulnerability when they were removed from familiar surroundings and facing unknown circumstances. They were on a journey, a journey of faith to the Promised Land, which can be physical and also Spiritual. It can be the same for us, as we journey in our life faith journey.

As Moses stands in between God and the people, and repairs the broken trust, calling God and the people back into Covenant – who stands between God and us? Who can we rely on to repair our broken trust between different entities? Whether it be with God, or with our faith, or with our leadership, and the list can go on. How much faith, leadership, and patience would that take to repair the broken trust?

A lot of what we are talking about today connects with our emotions. Last week we were so happy, giving thanks for all our blessings, this week we are wondering where God is – our emotions are playing with our minds – we know better, but something has got us down and it manufactures for us emotions that we are lonely – that no one cares.

Last week we talked about how we as the Church are a Community to each other. Coming to Church each week helps us to know we are not alone. That we have each other, and the Holy Scriptures remind us of God's presence with us, through the thick and thin. We know if we are feeling down, we can pick up the phone and talk to one of our Church friends. We can invite them out to lunch or for a coffee. Keeping our emotions in check can take some help – that's what friends are for. How do you personally engage with your emotions? How do you hold them at bay? What do you do with mistrust? Our emotions can show us how we receive meaning of what we are experiencing. Is that meaning and emotion valid? How might we pay attention to what our emotions are showing us of the meaning we make of our experiences? Could prayer be a good option? A call or conversation

with a good trusted friend might help us to validate our emotions. Either option allows us to concentrate on those emotions we are dealing with.

Emotions are very helpful in our day to day lives. Emotions can help us to stay safe from attacks from wild animals, help us find food, help us to get out there and praise God, to allow us to dance and share time with others in community. In this list, we no longer need the emotions to run away from wild animal attacks, but it is that same emotion that allows us to lash out at another in anger. We may not need to find food the same way in the 21st century as we did several centuries ago, but the ability to find lots of food keeps us very filled up, so much that our storage tanks expand. In some ways, those emotions that were so helpful centuries ago, are not so helpful today. Other emotions still help us navigate today's world.

Today's story is full of many emotions: the emotions of the people, of Aaron responding to the people, of Moses as he finds out, and repairs the rift between God and the people. What emotions do we hear in this story for God? What do we make of the emotions portrayed of God in this story? Do we have similar emotions with our experience of God?

We might easily judge the Israelites for their "golden calf", but we may need to consider what "golden calves" do we build, personally and as a community, even as a Church?

Anxiety, fear, and a desire for quick solutions are an understandable and common response to uncertain times. When do we see anxiety and fear in our community? What in our world today evokes anxiety, fear, and a desire for simple answers? Where might we see leadership reinforcing those fears, and where might we see leadership challenging those fears? Could it be that some people see that same leadership reinforcing those fears, while other see that leadership challenging those fears. Maybe our emotions help us to see different things in the same situation.

Our Sunday Morning Worship is often suggested that we bring the emotion of praise before God. But is that the only emotion we "can" bring before God? Today we are hearing about other emotions that we can also bring before God – even in worship. We may struggle to understand our emotions and how to name them.

We are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God!

Reflection Hymn: VU 670 "Precious Lord, Take ..."

Precious Lord, take my hand,

lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
through the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear,
precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone,
hear my cry, hear my call,
hold my hand lest I fall:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears,
and the night draws near,
and the day is past and gone,
at the river I stand,
guide my feet, hold my hand:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Thank You for your gifts, of time, talent, skills, prayers and money. All of these gifts added together, makes us the Church. We as givers are so blessed we can give. May those who receive - also know they are blessed. Thank you for being the church!

Offertory: VU 541 "Praise God From Whom..."

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.

Offertory Prayer:

People: Thank you, Holy One, for the fire in our bellies and the hope in our hearts. It is with every emotion that we share these gifts with your people. May they conspire with the work of your steadfast love. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: VU 291 "All Things Bright..." Chorus

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful:
in love, God made them all.*

Pastoral Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 664 “What a Friend We Have In Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Christ the Saviour is our refuge;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do our friends despise, forsake us?
Are we tempted to despair?
Jesus' strength will shield our weakness,
and we'll find new courage there. **

Benediction:

Eric: God does mighty works in our lives. Go and love in faith that God's love and peace will be with you now and forever more.

Closing Hymn: “Go Now In Peace”

**Go now in peace, never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know he will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen. Amen. Amen.**

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth

Prayers: - Please include these people in your prayers this week – as “In the Spirit We Are One”.

Cancer:

**Carol
Susan
Barb
Margie
Jerry**

**Larry
Ken
Natalie
Joan
Rick**

**Janet
David
Dave**

**Elizabeth
Alice
Mike and Janice
John and Barb
David
Lloyd
Don
Neil
Audrey
Edy
George
Harry/Ruth
Joyce
Ron / Sharon
Chris and Reeanna**