

BETHEL MURDOCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9602 Murdoch-Goshen Road, Loveland, OH 45140
October 24, 2021, 10:30 a.m.
Celebrating 207 years of Faithful Service to Our God
The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

We Enter Into God's Presence

WELCOME

L: This is the day that the Lord has made.

P: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

THE PEACE

L: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you.

“SURELY THE PRESENCE”

Surely the presence of the LORD is in this place.

I can feel His mighty power and His grace.

I can hear the brush of angel's wings, I see glory on each face.

Surely the presence of the LORD is in this place.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Jesus said: Those who love me will keep my word,

P: and my Father will love them,

L: and we will come to them

P: and make our home with them.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, tireless guardian of your people, ever prepared to hear the cries of your chosen ones, teach us to rely, day and night, on your care. Support our prayer, lest we grow weary. Drive us to seek your enduring justice and your ever-present help. Grant this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN: B- 383 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

1 My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine: Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away, O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

2 May Thy rich grace impart Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire; As thou hast died for me, O may my
love to Thee Pure, warm, and changeless be, A living fire!

3 While life's dark maze I tread, And griefs around me spread,
Be thou my guide; Bid darkness turn to day, Wipe sorrow's
tears away, Nor let me ever stray From Thee aside.

4 When ends life's transient dream, When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll, Blest Savior, then, in love, Fear and distrust
remove; O bear me safe above, A ransomed soul!

CALL TO CONFESSION:

The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were sinners Christ died for us. Because we have faith in him, we dare to approach God with confidence. In faith and penitence, let us confess our sin before God and one another as we pray together saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Merciful God, in your gracious presence we confess our sin and the sin of this world. Although Christ is among us as our peace, we are a people divided against ourselves as we cling to the values of a broken world. The profit and pleasures we pursue lay waste the land and pollute the seas. The fears and jealousies that we harbor set neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom, of intellect and reason, and have turned them into bonds of oppression. Lord, have mercy upon us; heal and forgive us. Set us free to serve you in the world as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

May the God of mercy, who forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

P: We know that we are forgiven and we can be at peace. Thanks be to God! Amen.

***RESPONSE: “Gloria Patri”**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.

We Hear God’s Word

SPECIAL MUSIC: W&R-491 “Open Our Eyes”

1 Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
to reach out and touch him, and say that we love him.

2 Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Hebrews 7:23-28

²³ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely^[a] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

²⁶ Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

PSALM: Psalm 126

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.

² Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,

“The LORD has done great things for them.”

³ The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, LORD,
like streams in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

MESSAGE:

See?

Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman

Prior to the pandemic, I really enjoyed watching people and how they interacted with one another, especially in a crowd. As I watched, I saw how people can be so very kind or so very cruel. Have you ever noticed that crowds can take on different personalities? They can be calm and generous, with a pleasant feeling overall. A crowd can be anxious and tense, with a feeling that the group is wound tight. A crowd can be kind and considerate with a caring feeling permeating the assembly. A crowd can be angry and ugly, with a sense of cruelty on the whole giving the feeling that it is just one step away from a mob scene. Most of us have

been in different place and situations when we have experienced all of these types of crowd personalities.

Often as we read scripture, we tend to ignore the crowds that are noted in the reading. Crowds tend to fall into the background and we do not really pay attention to the part that they play in the passage we are reading. So today we are going to explore the impact of the crowd on the blind man, Bartimaeus.

We are told that Jesus, his disciples and a large crowd are leaving Jericho. In those days, people who were disabled and had no way of working or fending for themselves were left to sit at the city gates in hopes of receiving alms from those well-bodied people who were entering and leaving the city.

They were very much like the homeless on our streets today; most people ignored them or were afraid of them, frightened of what they might say or do, uncertain of how they would respond. And in that group of people gathered at the gates of the city of Jericho, sat Bartimaeus, an intelligent man who knew all about what was happening in the world because he listened to the crowds of people as they passed through the gates, talking to one another about all manner of things while they paid no attention to the forgotten people sitting there, people like Bartimaeus.

On this day, Bartimaeus was once more listening to the crowd, interested in hearing what was happening in the world, when he heard someone in the crowd talking about the fact that Jesus was, at that moment, passing through the gates. Bartimaeus had often heard of Jesus and his teachings and miracles from travelers and how Jesus was a descendent of David, which meant that Jesus was the promised one, the one who would save Israel. Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the Messiah, surely Jesus could heal a blind man! So rather than sitting quietly and blending into the background, as was his custom, Bartimaeus began to shout, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!"

The crowd took on a haughty attitude acting as if they would protect Jesus from riffraff like blind beggars on the streets and in a mean spirited manner told Bartimaeus, "Shut up, a man as important as Jesus has no time for a nobody like you!" Most people would have ceased trying to get Jesus' attention after receiving such scathing comments. Except for the fact that Bartimaeus had listened, day in and day out, to the awe of the crowds as

they spoke of the healings that Jesus had performed. He knew that if Jesus heard him, Jesus would heal him. So he shouted even louder to be heard over the shushing of the unsympathetic crowd, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

A most amazing thing happened, Jesus stopped in his tracks, stood still and the crowd became still, waiting to hear what it was that Jesus had to say. Would he rebuke the blind man? Would he have mercy on the blind man? Jesus' words of, "Call him here" seemed to turn the tide of the crowd from unsympathetic to one of encouragement and hopefulness. The crowd informed Bartimaeus that Jesus was calling him. The crowd gave confidence to Bartimaeus as they urged him to get up and go to Jesus.

By examining the crowd's behavior and our own we find that blindness is not always a physical issue, we find that sometimes, it is a spiritual one. Isn't it fascinating that this crowd that initially ignored Bartimaeus being completely indifferent to who he was or what he faced to get through each day of his life. Upon his crying out, the crowd developed into a snarling, snarky unsympathetic shield intending to keep Bartimaeus from his optimistic dream of receiving healing from Jesus. And finally, the crowd is transformed into a warm encouraging and hope-filled witness to the eventual healing of the blind man.

Isn't that how we often live our lives? We are so wrapped up in our everyday busy-ness that we do not think beyond ourselves to what others are experiencing just to get through each day. Sometimes, when we do hear what it is that others believe they need, we make some off the cuff comment that is less than kind and we put them down.

But as Christians, at some point we get a wake up call and we remember that we have a Savior that died, not just for us, but for all people regardless of their differences or their state of health or well-being. And that recognition gives us the courage to shed our spiritual blindness so that we may see other people as children of God, change our negative mindset and be transformed into warm, encouraging and hope-filled witnesses to what Jesus has done in our lives so that we can then be supportive of others even in their times of darkness.

We shed our spiritual blindness when, like the crowd, we witness the light of Christ in this world. See?

We Respond with Thanksgiving

HYMN: B- 339 “Be Thou My Vision”

1 Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

2 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

3 Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord.
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall.
Still be my vision O Ruler of all.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen. (*The Apostles' Creed-Ecumenical*)

OFFERING (Please remember to mail your offering to Bethel Murdoch Presbyterian Church, 9602 Murdoch Goshen Road, Loveland, Ohio 45140)

JOYS & CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION – (Please send your joys and concerns to the church email and we will publish them in the weekly ENews)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Almighty God, in Jesus Christ you taught us to pray. Guide us by your Holy Spirit, that our prayers for others may serve your will and show your steadfast love.

God our creator, you made all things in your wisdom, and in your love you save us. We pray for the whole creation. Overthrow evil powers, right what is wrong, feed and satisfy those who thirst for justice, so that all your children may freely enjoy the earth you have made, and joyfully sing your praises.

Merciful God, you bear the pain of the world. Look with compassion on those who are sick in body, mind or spirit. Cheer them by your word, and bring healing as a sign of your grace.

God of comfort, stand with those who sorrow that they may be sure that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, shall separate them from your love.

God of all generations, we praise you for all your servants who, having been faithful to you on earth, now live with you in heaven. Keep us in fellowship with them, until we meet with all your children in the joy of your eternal kingdom.

Mighty God, whose Word we trust, whose Spirit enables us to pray: Accept our prayers and further those which will bring about your purpose for the earth; through Jesus Christ, the One who taught us to say as we pray,

THE 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

We are Sent Out to Love and Serve

HYMN: B-466 "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of his grace!

2 Jesus! the name that charms our fears, That bids our sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'Tis life and health and peace.

3 Christ breaks the power of reigning sin, And sets the prisoner free;
Christ's blood can make the sinful clean, Christ's blood availed for me.

4 My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim
To spread through all the earth abroad The honors of Thy name.

Charge and Benediction

Go out into the world in peace. Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.
And as you go out, know that you take with you the love of God, the grace
of Our Lord, Jesus Christ and the *awesome* power of the Holy Spirit.

Choral Amen

Postlude