Welcome to Crestholme Presbyterian Church 24th Sunday after Pentecost November 15, 2020

*Those who are able, please stand.

PRELUDE

" *Offertoire*"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8mKYDctt24

Dubois

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP *"He Is Here"* Choir <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lit87CZIm08</u>

OPENING PRAYER

*OPENING HYMN "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Him" Blue Hymnal #464 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMY3ivdNzwE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen. (From the PCUSA Book of Common Worship Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993; p. 88)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Hear the good news: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! Saints, in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

*GLORIA PATRI

Blue Hymnal #579

1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUBxpypSblw

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Judges 4: 1-7

Psalm 123

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Judges%204:1-7&version=NIV

PSALM READING

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+123&version=NIV

NEW TESTAMENT READING

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+5%3A+1-11&version=NIV

ANTHEM "Count Your Blessings" https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=6WDUpudh-pY Choir

GOSPEL READING Matthew 25: 14-30 https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3A+14-30&version=NIV

SERMON

Stay Awake

Fred Archer

November 17, 2002 <u>RCL: Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30</u> <u>Richard E. Helmer</u>

On this, the next-to-the-last Sunday of the church year, we hear one resounding theme in all our readings: "Stay awake. Be alert. Be found working with what you have been given."

For Christians in the early church, this was a message of absolute urgency, especially because much of the ancient church, as we hear implied in Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, believed that Christ's return was imminent. But what about us living in the 21st century? We might be tempted to be a little less urgent in our hope for Christ's return, so being prepared for it also carries a little less urgency.

Yet for our time, there may be another reason to be found hard at work, to remain alert, to avoid burying our gifts in a field while we wait for our master's return. We live in an era of incredibly fast change, and as we struggle to maintain and build our communities, we must constantly be aware of the changes occurring in the needs of the world we serve. What worked in building our faith communities 20 years ago, 10 years ago, and even only last year may not work today. The landscapes of this country and the greater world are in rapid transition, and as a church both locally and nationally, we cannot remain as we were and expect to be accessible and open to such a radically changing world.

Prevalent in Jesus' parable today is the fascinating conversation between the master and the slave who hid his master's talent in the ground. It is, in so many ways, a discourse for our times, a study of our struggle as a church in transition: "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours."

In a world of change, it may well be that God is in the business of reaping where we least expect the Spirit to have sown, gathering where Christianity's seed was apparently not scattered. Today's Gospel is an invitation for us to look outside of our stayed, historical boundaries at a world where God, at times like an opportunist, is harvesting spiritual abundance in the most unlikely places.

For us living in a land that is increasingly unchurched, this invitation can, in fact, be a declaration of our mission. We can no longer expect to harvest where Christianity once sowed. Our newest members, and our most abundant resources to grow as the Body of Christ, may be found amongst those who have never before darkened the door of the church, amongst those who have never before darkened the door of the church, amongst those who have never before darkened the door of the church.

Our greatest temptation is to be like the bad slave, to be afraid of being bold enough to try something new; to be scared of investing our gifts given to us not simply for ourselves, but for a world in need.

Investing our talents, it seems, means far from hiding them, but carrying our gifts for ministry into the most unlikely fields of mission -- sinking our resources into endeavors that we might not have imagined yesterday; of getting "outside the box" of our normal way of being and doing as a community in Christ and of really throwing our doors open wide; but not only so that people can walk in, but so that we can walk out into a changed world with the message of the Gospel.

What must await us there is the promise of the parable, that some of us will double, and perhaps even more than double, our investment as we participate with God in the practice of reaping where we did not sow, and gathering where we did not ever scatter.

And what also awaits us there is precisely what we seek in the deepest places of our hearts, the one thing we know that will conquer our fears of change, our fears of trying something new. For if God is anything at all like the master in today's parable, when we walk out into the world, we are going to meet God's Spirit there, waiting for us; and not just to settle our accounts, but to invite us into the joy of an abundant life that Christ is preparing for all Creation. Amen

*HYMN "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" Blue Hymnal #403 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTpUQO0aryw

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles' Creed (traditional) Blue Hymnal, p. 14** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick 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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Father God, hear us now as we lift our requests before you. Heal our world, our land, our nation, city, neighbors, and family. We pray for our enemies, for our military, leaders, pastors, sessions, and our government officials. Give them love and wisdom to lead and rule. Hear us now as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "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, for ever and ever. Amen."

*HYMN FOR OUR NATION "H*eal Our Land"* Red Hymnal #800 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm_rA54EGw

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

Blue Hymnal, #592

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8TkUuKIh84

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Lord, to thee we present what is rightfully yours. Take. Multiply, and use for thy kingdom's sake. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" Blue Hymnal #276 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKIqmdfHSk

*BENEDICTION

May the Grace of the Son, the Love of the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit go with you wherever he may lead you. Amen.

The end of this worship gathering - The beginning of service

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to worship this glorious morning! We're glad that you're here! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to become part of our compassionate church family... ask Dick or an Elder about meaningful participation and membership!

Dr. Carlos Baladez will lead our Sunday morning worship next Sunday.

COVID-19 Reminder

As we gather in worship together, we are reminded to adhere to the rules of "social distancing," hand washing, and facemask wearing. We have, to the best of our ability, cleaned and disinfected the sanctuary. Please cooperate by not sitting in the "skipped rows." Hymn books, Bibles, and bulletins are pre-distributed to indicate where to sit. Families are allowed to sit together. Thank you!