

Order of Worship for at Home Use

November 15, 2020

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6awi3NmIVSE>

May God's peace fill Your heart and mind as we enter, with intention, into our time of worship this week. We continue to live in a strange time, yet, God is with us. God is for us. God will never leave us. It is right, then, that we can rest in His presence, seek His face, and rely on His grace throughout all of life.

In these moments of worship, today, we honor those who have served in our armed forces. We seek God's peace for our city, nation and world. We pray for healing and help in this time of hardship. We ask for God's provision as we watch the unfolding of events surrounding our elections.

Again this week you are encouraged to find a place where you can center your heart and mind on Christ, you might light a candle, bring your bible and take a deep breath as you join in our time of worship.

Let us worship God together.

With God's love,

Pastor Dana

We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" L. McKechnie
Dr. Jerry Reeves, pianist and Dr. David Dorway, organist
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hDjcTKBrsU>

Welcome Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPi64_YJrBI

Welcome to worship with us at Grace Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas. We are thrilled you are worshipping with us. We gather remotely online and in person to give glory to God and come into His presence. God has promised to be with us even to the very end of the age. During our time of worship we celebrate that God is on His throne and God is with us. In times of celebration, in times of sorrow and in times of confusion, God is with us. So, let us worship the living God who is at our side now and always.

Call to Worship Micah 6:8 Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEPWRbtSSqA>

One: We know what God desires:

All: That we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

One: We gather in our homes and at church, scattered by COVID, but reminded of what God desires

All: Let us worship God and do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

Hymn "No Greater Love" T. Walker Praise Team
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMOJX3hGdRs>

Sharing the Peace of Christ **not in video**

**The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...
and also with you.**

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you."

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSLcOdo0SU4>

Oh God, at this moment we are overwhelmed. Our world spins out of control. There is confusion and lawsuits regarding who will lead us and how we as a people choose our leaders. There is a pandemic that is surging and uncertainty and lack of trust over what we are being told. Our economy and personal finance is turbulently changing and threatening our future with a wild stock market, crisis created unemployment and an uncertain financial future. We are tired of being kept inside, forced to wear masks and limited in what we can do and where we can go.

While all this is happening around us and to us, our personal lives need your attention and grace. Our loved ones are ill and in need, people who serve us as first responders, care givers, merchants and protectors are in danger. Injustice and violence hang in the air.

God, we are tired and scared. Please reveal yourself to us once again. Remind us that you are a God of grace and healing, love and forgiveness. Help us to remember that we are chosen to be part of your team bringing good news and hope to our world. God gives us opportunities to serve others with humility and compassion. Let us be examples of grace that brings justice and demonstrates true Christian morality to our hurting world. Help us be healers of body, mind and soul, ours as well as others.

God as the days shorten, pull back the covers and let the light in once again. Let your people bring peace, thankfulness, hope and joy.

We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ saying

*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 sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.*

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.*

We Listen to God's Word

Hymn/Praise

“Jesus Loves Me”

not in video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>

Children's Message

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVuZrb734tk>

I wonder, children, if you had a super-power...what would it be? We talk alot about such things at our house. One of our favorite super heroes is Spider Man. there is a phrase that is associated with him. Do you know it? “With great power comes great responsibility.” Did you know that when you become a Christian, when you believe in Jesus you get a superpower? That superpower is showing the love of God to the world. We have a responsibility to show the love of God using our resources, our time, our special abilities, and everything we are..so that other people can know the love of God and get the same super power.

Special Music

“Goodness of God”

Johnson/Ingrahm/Cass
Kathy, Dana, Don &

Jen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_9bfikzl2U

4 “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; **15** to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. **16** The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. **17** In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. **18** But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. **19** After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. **20** Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ **21** His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ **22** And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ **23** His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ **24** Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; **25** so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ **26** But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? **27** Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. **28** So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. **29** For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. **30** As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Message

“Hiding Your Talent”

Pastor Dana Pope

Holy, loving God, we pray that You would reveal Yourself to us through Your Word today. Speak to us words of life and hope that we might see Your Holy kingdom, and increasingly walk in it – participating in the work that You are already doing. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing to You – for You are our rock and redeemer. Amen.

Today’s reading is from the gospel of Matthew. Chapter 25:14-30

If you have been in the church for any length of time, you know what’s coming when you hear today’s parable from the Gospel of Matthew. It is stewardship season!

The Parable of the Talents is familiar... We know when we hear it that we will be encouraged to give, be courageous and use what talents and gifts God has given us for the good of His kingdom. This week our stewardship letter and pledge cards will be mailed out and we will begin to plan for 2021 in the budgeting process. This is an important part of what we do as the church as we plan our mission and ministry in the Kingdom of Heaven.

(Should I just sit down now?)

I could, and we would have heard a synopsis of the sermon that we often hear. And rightly so. For we are called to use our talents and share our resources in this life, for the good of the kingdom...to participate in the work that God is doing in and among us.

But I can't sit down. I want to share with you what I found as I studied this week.

First remember Matthew was probably writing to a largely Jewish community, so he uses lots of OT references and really puts emphasis on how Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT. He is a big picture – eschatological - guy. He has an eye toward the end times – which is our hope - and puts a lot of emphasis on how to live in the kingdom of heaven – while still on earth. Living faithfully and righteously in hard times – endurance – and continuing to live with anticipation and hope that Jesus will return. We see much of that play out in our parable today.

And it is a message we need in our troubled times. Yes?

Anticipation of heaven and hope in Jesus' return.

In this section of Matthew, starting in chapter 24... we see an extended discussion. Jesus tells the disciples that the temple buildings will be thrown down... they then ask the questions: When will we see the temple destroyed? What is the sign of your coming? How will we know it is the end of the age?

What follows in chapter 24 is Jesus' instructions on how to wait for His return. Watch out for deceit...live with righteousness and faithfulness...be prepared...keep watch.

And then Jesus speaks of what the kingdom of heaven will be like... it is like this...a man who is going on a journey, entrusts his servants with his *property*. One is given 5 talents, another 2, and the 3rd servant, 1.

The thing that struck me most this week is the word *talent*. More specially our narrow reading of that word for the most part.

In our vernacular we use the word to mean our special God given abilities, our wealth and resources. But as I studied this week I began to wonder if maybe it's actually bigger than all of that.

A talent was (in the ANE) a denomination of money...which equaled about 20 years of wages. 20 years. So the 1st servant was given 100 years worth of wages to manage in the master's absence. The 2nd – 40 years, and the third (poor guy) just 20 years.

Folks this is HUGE money... lottery money.

While Jesus does spend quite a bit of time talking about money, I don't think finances is the point of this parable. AND, No offense to the varied and wonderful talents for music and teaching and baking and numbers and nursing and compassion and ... all of the things that make each of us unique and special and give us purpose and passion... but what if it's more even than all of those talents put together? The question becomes, what is bigger than that – which as servants of Christ - we have been given?

I have begun to wonder if Jesus was actually talking about the gospel message itself...and not talking so much to us individually, but to all of us communally.

What if talent here is THE truth of God's love and even the kingdom of heaven – itself. Grace and life in Christ... given with super abundance.

As the people of God we have been gifted that grace. And that feels much more important and much bigger than how we usually think of our individual talents.

What if Jesus is inviting us - as we live in the now and not yet – as we are called to be in the world but not of the world... knowing that Jesus has won the victory over sin and death...but has not yet returned to take us into His kingdom in all of its fullness...

What if Jesus is inviting us to be intentionally involved in His kingdom while we wait? And the “talent” we are given is actually the many and varied opportunities we are given every day to participate in the actual life of Christ around us – by using all that we have and all that we are?

- What if, Peter had decided not to participate... and when Jesus invited him to get out of his boat...he declined. He was a fisherman, and was comfortable in the boat...but he decided to jump all in...to participate in the life of Christ...the opportunity was to venture out...and walk on the water.
- Esther was the queen. But she was invited and had the opportunity to participate in the future of the people of Israel. She took the opportunity and in the process she risked her life and confronted the king... God's people were saved because she took action.

I truly believe that no matter how old you are, no matter what stage of life you are in, you are given an abundance of opportunities to serve in the kingdom. Opportunities to share in the life of Christ. Someone who is raising a family may find opportunities that are closer to home and have to do with the important task of growing faith in children, and teaching responsibility and Godly character. Others who are retired are given opportunities to mentor and share knowledge and sit with others showing compassion and love and God's grace. No matter our age or station we can participate in the life and mission and ministry of the church...by sharing our resources...as we are led. But thinking that that is the total of stewardship is much too narrow a focus!

I recently heard someone say that a survey was taken of 90 year olds...asking... if you look back on your life, what do you wish you had done differently?

The #1 answer: take more risks.

What if the parable of the talents is about 2 servants who involved themselves – took opportunities to participate fully in the kingdom of their master... and the 1 servant who saw the truth of the gospel, but did not participate...chose not to risk his comfortable established life. He chose not share in the fullness of the life of Christ, and in effect hid his talent...

What might it look like if the people of God came to a place of seeing this parable as a call to practice DAILY a spiritual discipline, instead of once a year trying to figure out where our true talent lies – and how to sign up to use it in church; how much money we have to share – fill in the pledge card and we are done; or which mission or ministry we can help with – in the time we have to give?

What if listening to the opportunities given (in abundance) by Holy Spirit became our practice and participating in those opportunities our default way of life? What kind of stewards would we be then?

I believe that Holy Spirit is gently trying to invite us to take opportunities all of the time...but we hesitate, or we don't pay attention. We think we have nothing to offer, or most of our life is past – maybe the story is mostly complete. Or maybe we think we don't have time because of the stage of life we are in. BUT God is constantly building into us a knowledge of Him, pouring into us His love and grace...and THOSE are the things that we are called to share. And by sharing them, they multiply. In sharing those things, we might even be sharing our special abilities, our finances and our time!

If we bury them... if we hide God's grace in our hearts...keep it to ourselves and refuse to speak the truth or keep ourselves apart from those that need that hope and light... then we will be cast out in the end.

I wonder: How is Holy Spirit calling you to participate in the kingdom of heaven today?

Maybe another way to think about this is to say: are there people or situations or issues or places that are in your awareness... but that you are ignoring or dismissing? Why?

Is it because you sense that if you made those connections or decisions – if you reached out to those people – that you would be uncomfortable or out of your element? OR, do you fear that Jesus might ask something of you if you went there?

I wonder if that was the real problem with the 3rd servant... he was comfortable with what he had...and he became complacent in his role... so he hid his talent and lived a small, insolated, life. At least until the return of the master, and it was revealed that living life in that way was not – after all – the safe way to live.

Friends, as we look at the parable of the talents, today I want to invite you to review the opportunities Holy Spirit is laying before you to be in service to the Kingdom of Heaven. Are you willing to stretch yourself? Come out of your comfortable ways of being and participate more fully in the life of Christ which is offered in superabundance to all of us? Maybe we can begin to think of stewardship as a spiritual discipline that invites us to enter more fully into God's kingdom opportunity after opportunity!

May it be so! Amen!

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KB7LSQ3XjQ>

Offering is giving of oneself in response to God's grace. As you have received God's blessings please prayerfully consider how you might give back to God, bringing blessing and grace to our world.

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents and our resources...this is not about funding the church or fundraising, it is an act of worship. We respond to God's Word, His love for us, and His mercy by giving of ourselves. We give all sorts of things, including our hearts, our finances, our time and our gifts. Let us now participate in God's kingdom by returning God's tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link: <https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“Pie Jesu” A.L. Webber

Lisa & Katharyne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUjsUNqpm58>

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lXfmvTiHvtY>

Holy God we thank you for all the blessings you have poured out in our lives. Thank you for our loved ones and our relationships. Thank you for our resource and the time you have given each of us. Thank you for your grace and the gifts of second chances. Out of gratitude we give these gifts and ask that you bless them and use them for the work of our kingdom.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn

#589 “Here I Am, Lord”

Lisa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaI6J8yww9s>

Benediction

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gaeD4Kiqb8>

Postlude

“Recessional in C” J. Dixon

Dr. David Dorway, Organist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNyZJTMPrcM>

Acknowledgements

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRWOLzvopR0>

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people
in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens)

Alice Black (Skilled Nursing at Las Ventanas)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Bernard Busswell, Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark,
Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan, Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie Everhart, Joice Franklin,
Mary Gafford, Terry Glaser, Pam Kodey, Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon,
Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Maggie O'Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer,
Taylor Palmer, Mary Phillips, Russ & Pat Reid, Aminta & Jorge Santanilla,
Bruce Simon, Marty Swartout, Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020

Randy Innis 3/18/2020

Clark Trapp 3/18/2020

Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020

Ted Phillips 4/1/2020

Violet Cross 4/4/2020

Bill Franklin 5/4/2020

Greg Holt 5/7/2020

Carol Mohr 5/25/2020

Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020

Louis Romero 8/8/2020

Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020

Gary Oiler 8/23/2020

Donna Gibson 9/14/2020