

Sunday Flow September 4, 2016

10:30 Call to Worship: Worship Leader

Open up the Heavens

Great Are You Lord

In Christ Alone

Communion: The Old Rugged Cross

Pastoral Prayer:

Slides:

James 5: 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up.

Communion:

Big problems do not just exist out “there” in the world, but also within the community of God’s people.

Within the Corinthian congregation there existed abuse of power, abuse the poor by the wealthy, and abuse of God given special gifts and abilities.

There was a misunderstanding of the Kingdom of God, and many felt like they were as the angels, and no longer were to have gender distinctions, and be an angelic spiritual being.

Into this mix, is found the passages dealing with the body and blood of Jesus.

FYI: Where we as a congregation stand.

Men and women are a balanced pair; a woman doesn't need another mediator. Only one mediator, in her relationship with God and that is Christ Jesus. Man isn't given more weight in a relationship, a job, or anything, be encouraged to allow the empowering of the Holy Spirit, to align our homes into a balanced pair.

Abusing the poor in a church setting is unacceptable in the bible and in VAOG. All are welcome to share in Holy Communion. It is open to all.

The bible doesn't elevate tongues above any other of the special abilities of the Holy Spirit, and neither should we.

As we share communion, consider this fact.

A woman is given freedom to choose who, if any, is the authority over her. 1 Cor. 11 gives that authority to her, and consider taking it back for your life if someone has tried to steal it from you.

Empowering means you receive power from the Holy Spirit. Let no one of the male gender over power you. In Christ, you as a gender were present when "everyone was filled", and you are to be and remain in an empowered relationship with God, through Christ Jesus.

These are weighty matters, and entire denominations choose to give the male dominance over woman, and for harmony in this congregation, we choose to see the bible giving male and female equality.

We choose to make all races equal, and no one race is given more or less weight in decisions.

Brenda had it in her heart to visit the church that a young white man, sat in on a mid week bible study, with good, godly, Black brothers and sisters. He then pulled out a gun and completed his pre-meditated murder of good godly men and women, solely on the basis of racial biases.

Within the community of God's people, we choose, to see all as equals. No one is better than or less than.

To take communion unworthily, means that you misunderstand the nature of Jesus.

If you are wealthy, and we all are, and you use that wealth to over power the poorer than you, then you take communion unworthily.

If you are a male and consider your gender more empowered than the female gender, then you take communion unworthily and do not discern the body of Christ.

If you have received a special ability, a special giftedness, such as gift of tongues and bully those who haven't, as if receiving the gift makes you more spiritual than others, then you take communion unworthily.

And when you take communion unworthily, it opens the opportunity for sin to work in your life, and scriptures says, many are weak, many are sick and many die young because of this misunderstanding of 1 Cor. 11 and 12.

So, to say that these two chapters are important is an understatement.

As I read a short passage of scripture, consider being made worthy by a relationship with God, through Christ Jesus. It is Jesus, not a gender, it is Jesus, not your wealth, and it is Jesus, not a gift that makes one righteous before God. It is Jesus, not a special ability, or giftedness, or that makes one worthy.

1 Cor. 11:

23For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself.

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread 24and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, **"This is my body, which is given for you.**



Do this to remember me." 25In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant**

between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it."

Slide: 26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

Prayer:

Receive Communion

Review Summer Theme:

Empowered Summer Service:

Slide:

- **Empowering Service – God calls us to impact our community through empowered service, each one stepping up, knowing that we are blessed to be a blessing.**

Prayer for the students and school staff to return to school. (We are going to do this next week also, once everyone has a better understanding of what is happening in his or her school)

Call the kids/youth and school staff forward.

Give everyone an acorn from the live oaks.

"You may think, that you are insignificant, and like this little acorn, pretty small in this big wide world. Or... you may feel a little too significant, a big shot in this big wide world. I hope not, but let us learn from the little acorn, how much potential exists within us, and not to waste it on unworthy pursuits.

Slide: Picture of the Angel Oak Tree.

Our first visit in Charleston was to the Angel Oak Tree. These acorns were picked up, underneath the trees that were near the Angel Oak. Most likely, they fell from the trees that grew from a little acorn like the ones you are holding.

The Angel Oak grew from one little acorn.

What will each of you need to be and become, in order to grow from a little acorn into a full, mature tree like the Angel Oak?

It is estimated that the tree is between 500 and 1500 years old. How many different natural disasters has it lived through? How many hurricanes, tropical storms, pests, have it overcome?

We, as a community of God's people are fully supportive of you, and recognize your God given, potential.

It is our privilege to stand with you and help facilitate your growth in Christ.

Cathy Knutson serves as the team lead for children and youth. It is her privilege to serve you, and the nurture and facilitate the potential with you.

We join in prayer with you, for God's power, protection, and God's potential with you to be fully utilized.

Prayer

Hospitality Time: Kids and Youth pick up your art bags and draw or create something around today's sermon.

Susan Gonchar: Welcome Guests and Announcements

One of these:

<http://www.wfcmva.org/food-pantry> Western Fairfax Christian Ministries

<http://www.foodforothers.org/> Food for Others

<https://thealternativehouse.org/> the Alternative House

Brenda: Describe the Discipleship Mosaic idea.

Tom Kraft: Offering

Brenda: Offertory

Sermon: Empowering Summer Service

Subtitle: Stepping Up

Slide:

12The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.

27All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

**The Word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.**

Prayer:

Lord help us move from the me to the we, from the selfie to the together.

Help us realize our full potential is linked to our empowering relationship with God, through Christ Jesus.

When many people are stepping down from leadership and ministry, help us not conform the pattern of the world, but help us be transformed so we can step up to leadership and ministry, not backing down or away from the challenges of being a fully active member of the body of Christ,

Help us all see that it is the natural and normal part of being a part of the body of Christ, to be actively participating in the life of that body.

Today, we are praying for 100% of this body of Christ, to step up into leadership and ministry.

In Jesus name,
Amen.

Slide: Stepping UP

(a few pictures of stepladders)

We can step up or step down from being an active member in the body of Jesus Christ.

We can either be active or inactive in the body of Christ.

We can participate or we can disengage in the body of Christ.

We can build up the body of Christ, or we can tear it down.

We can encourage the body of Christ, or we can discourage the body of Christ.

Each of us has been given the free gift of being made in the image of God. With that gift, comes the freedom to choose whom, if any will be the authority over you.

Each of us, as made in the image of God, has a choice to step up or step down as active participants in the body of Christ.

With the use of steps and stepladders we will, together, experience the revelation of stepping up into ministry.

By God's grace we will have our hearts open to:

27All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

What if, for example, the exit light over the door had burned out, and needed changing. I was searching for a way to reach the light.

And, you knew that I had access to a stepladder.

And, I told you, I cannot reach the light bulb, so someone else must be the one to change the light bulb. Only 7 ft. people are the ones to change the light bulbs?

What would you say to me?

(Hopefully you would say, use a step ladder), and hopefully you would not say, only 7 ft. people are qualified to change light bulbs.)

That works for the exit lights.

How about the spot lights?

What would you say to someone who would say, only 13 ft. tall people are the ones to change spotlights?

(Bring out tall ladder)

There are all kinds of emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual challenges to step up into ministry.

Illustrate Fear, physical ability, balance, etc.

Ask a coaching question.

Using the changing the light bulbs with a stepladder metaphor.

What are some reasons; you or others may not be stepping up into ministry?

This is just a metaphorical communication.

Now, once agree to join God's mission, and step up, what advice would you give to someone who is about to step up into a ministry that is similar in scope to this tall stepladder.

(Pause for advice)

Slide:

Slide: Application

(at mouse click) Proverbs 4: 23 Guard your heart above all else,

for it determines the course of your life.

Stepping up is a heart issue.

Stepping down is a heart issue.

Being a spectator in a body of Christ is not being a functional member of that body.

The Holy Spirit manifests itself in diverse ways, within the unity of body of Christ, and in this community of God's people, be encouraged toward a life filled with empowering service which will be varied and diverse if it is led by the Holy Spirit.

God calls us to impact our community through empowered service, each one stepping up, knowing that we are blessed to be a blessing.

Acts 2 states:

Slide:

4And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Slide: Love Never gives up (I Cor. 13:7

On the journey to finding your place in the body of Christ, it will be filled with opportunities to fail. Never give up after a failure, it is just one more opportunity to know your trust is in the Lord, and it may not have been the best fit for your giftings.

2 Timothy 1:8

Slide:

2 Timothy 1:8 (NLT)

So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord.

Stepping up, or stepping down, or not even trying are all a heart issue and it is a choice we all have. Church leaders can guilt someone into ministry, or force someone into ministry, or manipulate someone into ministry. It is done, but it isn't long lasting.

Finding your place in the body of Christ, is to “never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord”

Stepping up into ministry is “never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord”.

Slide:

Luke 9:26 (NLT)

If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

We are all equals.

We are all distinct.

We do not lose our distinctions, just as an arm is a distinct part of a human body. That was the error of some of the Corinthians. They felt they had become like angels, and no longer had the distinctions of being human, and being more spiritual than others, they used that against others. We are not angels; we remain distinctly human, with all our human frailties, appetites, and tenancies to sin.

In this congregation, genders remain distinct and equal.

In this congregation, races remain distinct and equal.
In this congregation, ages remain distinct and equal.

The scriptures serve as edification and a warning. “if anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when, (NOT IF) he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

On this Labor Day Sunday, I unashamedly ask everyone, to consider yourself as equal to everyone else, and to step up, in the power of the Holy Spirit into ministry.

Within an empowered relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, you can step up into leadership and ministry.

(Blank out the screen)

The answer is in the God who is all-powerful and empowering. This is how you can step up into ministry.

A: Accept the fact that you need and want a relationship with God, through Christ Jesus.

Slide:

John 10: 10,11

My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

Jesus’ purpose was to give us “a rich and satisfying life.”

Step up into that purpose, and step up into accepting Jesus.

B: Believe and confess that since God raised Jesus from the dead that he can raise you up as well.

Romans 10:

Slide:

9If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.10For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

Then,

C: Confess that belief, openly, publically, and more importantly privately, in your self-talk.

On the stepladders of life and ministry, confess the Lordship of Christ, publically, and privately. Overcome fear, overcome being ashamed of Jesus, and overcome being ashamed to invite someone to this body of Christ.

Altar call and prayer

Probably more so than even the first of the year, does the first week of school signal a new beginning.

This could be a day of a new beginning for all of us together and each of us individually.