



Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

August 15, 2021

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit." John 3:3-5 (NLT)

*Call to Worship

*Open the eyes of our heart Lord,
Open the eyes of our heart.
We want to see You,
We want to see You.
To see You high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of Your glory.
Pour out Your Power and Love
**As we sing Holy, Holy, Holy
Holy, Holy, Holy.**
Open the eyes of our heart Lord
Open the eyes of our heart.
We want to see You.*

*Opening Prayer

Holy Father, hasten the day when all people may know the joy, peace, and harmony of Your Kingdom. Grant unto us this day the power to live in such a way that evidences Your Kingdom within. In Jesus' blessed name we pray. Amen.

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

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. Amen.

Prayer for Your Kingdom to Come, Your Will to Be Done

Praying the Lord's Prayer

~ written by Thom Shuman

Our Father who art in heaven: remind us this day that you are not only creation's Architect, but you are the Babe who cried for food, the teenager who knew loneliness, the adult who felt the rejection of loved ones.

Hallowed by Thy name: yours is the name spun by the stars; yours is the name whispered by the dying; yours is the name written on our hearts.

Thy Kingdom come: may it be a kingdom of peace, not prejudice; may it be a kingdom of sharing, not grasping; may it be a kingdom of hope, not hurting.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: may your Word be more than print on a page; may your justice be more than a wish in our hearts; may your will become our deepest desire.

Give us this day our daily bread: let us taste it in the kisses of loved ones; let it fill us in the empty moments of our lives; let it slip out of our hands to mend the brokenness of our world.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive others: may those who have hurt us find a welcome in our hearts, even as we have found our home in yours.

And lead us not into temptation: turn our hearts from the seductions of our world; and the simple pleasures that turn us from you. Keep us from thinking we are so important that we ignore those around us.

Help us to always bring others to you in prayer, before we bring ourselves, as we do in these moments: **Prayers are lifted for others...**

But deliver us from evil: not just great evils of war and hunger, but from ingratitude, self-love, pride, all those little evils that do such great harm.

For thine is the kingdom: our heart's true longing; **and the power:** which you set aside to serve us in weakness; **and the glory:** which we would mirror in our lives, our bodies, our minds, our souls, this day and every day. Forever and ever. Amen

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

John 3:1-5

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Message

"Thy Kingdom Come"

Tom Helber

*Hymn of Faith

"It Is Well With My Soul"

UMH 377

Blessing

In this world: kingdom living.

In our mouths: kingdom praises.

In our hearts: kingdom goals.

In our hands: kingdom gifts.

Thy kingdom come,

thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven! Amen.



John 3:1-5 (NLT)

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.

²After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

³Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” ⁴“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” ⁵Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.

Morning Has Broken

*1 Morning has broken
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
Fresh from the Word!*

*2 Sweet the rain's new fall
Sunlit from Heaven,
Like the first dewfall
On the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
Of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness
Where his feet pass.*

*3 Mine is the sunlight,
Mine is the morning,
Born of the one light
Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning,
God's re-creation
Of the new day!*

It Is Well with My Soul

*1. When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Refrain:

*It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

*2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul.*

(Refrain)

*3. My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

(Refrain)

*4. And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.*

(Refrain)

Thy Kingdom Come

Tom Helber

A. Jesus has a visitor

- a. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, well regarded of the “elect Leaders” keying on John 3:3 ‘**Must assuredly I say to you, “unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”**’.

Nicodemus said, “How can a man be born again when he is old....?”

Jesus replied: “**Most assuredly I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**”

Do not marvel that I said unto you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

And when Nicodemus questioned how can these things be, Jesus said, “**Are you a teacher of Israel and do not UNDERSTAND these things?**”

*Jesus is taking Nicodemus, **and us**, into the MYSTERY of God’s Kingdom*

B. Jesus calls His disciples

- a. Jesus said: “I must preach The Kingdom of God, and for this purpose I have been sent (Luke 4:43b) **The Kingdom is the heartbeat of Jesus’ teaching!** We would be *well-advised* to understand its meaning and make it the center of our lives as well. *The gospel is more than a message of salvation that offers escape from hell and eternal life in heaven. It is a pattern for living!*
- b. Jesus taught them to “**Love your enemies**” and “**Do not judge**” and “**Don’t even bear a grudge**” ... Jesus’ teachings raised many questions and offended some, - they just didn’t understand nor want a life that was so unlike that to which they were accustomed. change our thinking??, don’t think so!

- c. Jesus by now has a number who have been so moved by His authoritative manner and His message of peace that they cannot resist following Him, though they thought the *peace* He spoke of was the removal of the Romans.
- d. Jesus selects 12 of His followers to go to the lost sheep of Israel and as you go preach and say: “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 10:7 and Luke 9:2) (They may not have, and probably didn’t, grasp the import of that message)

Later Jesus will select 70 others of His followers and send them out “two by two” to go ahead of Him to the cities He Himself planned to follow (Luke 10:1) with the same message “The Kingdom of God has come near.”

- C. **What is ‘The Kingdom’** and would we recognize it if we ‘saw’ it?
there is this drive within each of us to reach back and regain what was
 Jesus told many parables to explain what The Kingdom is like.
- a. The Kingdom is like: a mustard seed Mark 4:30 – 32
 - i. Consider the beginning of a seed’s growth, it is out of sight;
 So, it grows *in secret* ... **for an adult this means** *be at peace, calm those random thoughts that swirl around you*, for a child it’s easier
 - ii. It depends on more than suitable soil, there must be water and sunlight for *proper nourishment* and to bring out *its potential*
 ... *spending time with Jesus in solitude feeds and nourishes the soul*
 - b. When asked why He spoke in parables Jesus said to His disciples: “**Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.**”
(so again, Jesus is calling us to look beyond the obvious; it is beyond even what we could imagine, ... but, be ready for an awakening)

D. The Pharisees asked ‘**when**’ the Kingdom of God would come (**LUKE 17:20-24**)

- a. The Kingdom of God will not be seen by the eye
- b. Then Jesus said to His disciples: “**Do not go after foolish claims of the appearance; for as the lightning flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.**”

- c. It will come with the sounding of The Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed (**Revelation 11:15, 19b**)
- E. How shall we live while we await God's timing?
- a. Matthew 25: 1- 13 --- parable of the wise and foolish virgins
we should await the bridegroom Keep our lamps trimmed and burning
 - b. **Ephesians 5:15-20** "walk circumspectly ... "
 - c. "the Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"
(Romans 14:17)
 - d. consider Mark 9:1, Jesus stated: "There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God present with power."
- F. In 1999 in the Los Rios region of southern Chile, orthopedic surgeon, devoted wife, and loving mother Dr. Mary Neal drowned in a kayak accident. While cascading down a waterfall, her kayak became pinned at the bottom and she was immediately and completely submerged. Despite the rescue efforts of her companions, Mary was underwater for too long, and as a result, died.

To Heaven and Back is Mary's remarkable story of her life's spiritual journey and what happened as she moved from **life** .. to **death** .. to **eternal life** .. and back again. Detailing her feelings and surroundings in heaven, her communication with angels, and her deep sense of sadness when she realized it wasn't her time, Mary shares the captivating experience of her modern-day miracle.

After Mary's entrapment in her kayak she felt her body being sucked out by the force of the water. At the moment of her release her body began to tumble. She felt a "pop" as if she had shaken off a heavy outer layer, freeing her soul. She felt a rising up out from the surface of the water and encountered a group of fifteen to twenty souls who greeted her with overwhelming joy. Mary said that while she could not identify each spiritual being as someone by name I knew each of them well, knew they were from God. She said she knew they were sent to guide her across the divide of time and dimension.

... during this time her kayaking companions had located her submerged kayak under a powerful waterfall. There was nothing that they could stand on and the water force was too great to even reach down to grab the kayak. One of the friends said the whole atmosphere became different. Tom Long said he felt as if time shifted and God was taking control. He and the others looked down into the water and a dry rock suddenly appeared in the middle of the water flow. From the sturdy rock. Chad was then able to straddle the rocks and securely grip Mary's kayak. Though Chad was a young and incredibly strong man he could not budge the kayak. They each noted that only God's intervention would make a difference and as they reached for my boat one more time, Tom describes feeling a "sonic boom without the sound." During this Mary's kayak shifted slightly, moving her body more fully into the current ripping off her life jacket and helmet and then sucked her out of the kayak and down the river. No one saw Mary's body exit the boat as it was upside down but upon seeing the life jacket floating down the stream Chad dove in to try and retrieve it sadly thinking it would be given to Mary's family. When he reached the life jacket and held it up he felt Mary's body bump into his legs. He hadn't known that she was even there. Her body was purple, bloated and severely oxygen-starved (normal levels should be 80-100 but Mary's was in the 40's). Her eyes were devoid of life.

Once they physically managed to get her out onto a bank they immediately began CPR, and were calling out to her, "Mary, you cannot leave us. We know you are here. Come back. Please take a breath." And Mary would use all her will to make a gasp.

... While her heavenly guides were ushering her to that grand hall Mary would stop them a couple of times and ask if she could be excused for a brief moment to go back into her body and give those friends of hers working over her a reassuring "gasp".

They arrived at the entrance of a great hall with many spirits bustling about and as Mary was ushered in they all turned and looked at her with great compassion and love. But before we could enter her guides turned to her and said that it was not my time to enter the hall; I had not completed my journey on earth, I had more work to do, and must return to my body.

There were shouts of relief and excitement among the companions working over her as they saw her eyelids flutter open. The next task was to get her out of this

isolated river spot and back through the bamboo jungles surrounding them to aide. At about this time several young Chilean men materialized out of nowhere. A couple of them helped lift and begin to carry the kayak to which Mary had been carefully secured for the trip out, while another of these men started pushing through the bamboo to make a path for them. No words were spoken to them or by them; they just knew what to do. Eventually they found a single-track dirt path, which led to a dirt road. It was a tremendous surprise when upon emerging from the forested area there was an ambulance parked on the side of a road. The driver didn't speak but he seemed to be waiting for us.

Once Mary was securely at a first-aid station Ken and Chad first tried to find the young men who had been such a great help in carrying her through the forest. They were nowhere to be found and the people from the village had no idea who they could be talking about.

Even the trip back through the jungle seemed much more difficult than they remembered it being when they followed the team carrying Mary out. And when they resumed the task of trying to free Mary's kayak the rock that they stood on that enabled them to get Mary herself freed was no longer there.

Once sometime afterward Mary was having morning coffee with her mother, who had come to be with her for awhile and help in Mary's rehabilitation. They were considering whether or not her mother should return to North Carolina to be with her ex, by name of George and Mary's stepfather, who was in the hospital with pneumonia. As they discussed this a great grey owl swooped down and landed on the deck railing adjacent to their breakfast area. Being a large and elegant bird they were awed and continued to admire it. One of Mary's cats slowly walked to the railing and reached up toward the owl. The owl, which could easily have eaten it for a snack, gave our cat a quick look, disregarded it, and continued to stare in our direction. The owl seemed to have concern only for us. Throughout that day and subsequent days, the owl appeared to follow us as we moved from room to room.

My mother and I finally came to a decision that she should cut her visit short and go to be with her ex. As my mother was climbing into the taxi to begin her trip home the great grey owl settled onto a nearby post and simply stared at me insistently, as it had done all week. I could not ignore the intensity of its gaze and felt as though it would come and land directly on my head if I didn't immediately give it my full attention. That owl clearly had something to say and,

when I finally paid attention, I felt the owl urging me to go with my mother to North Carolina. As my stepfather and I had an extremely close and important bond if he were to die without my being present, I knew I would be devastated and overcome with remorse. With only a fleeting thought of my still present difficulty of traveling in my condition I decided to accompany my mother. I grabbed my purse, gave one last look of gratitude to the owl for its guidance and persistence and got in the taxi with my mother.

The visit with George was uplifting and he was in high spirits. But on the next day as they returned to the hospital George's condition had taken a turn for the worse and his organs were failing. They held each other and held George as his spirit peacefully left this world.

Mary's return trip to Jackson Hole was taxing for her but calm. Upon arriving in her driveway at home she saw that great grey owl land once again. It settled onto a post within arm's reach of me and we fondly regarded each other. With tears in her eyes and gratitude in her heart, Mary recognized the angel within the owl and gave thanks for the compassionate guidance it had given to her. The owl was not seen again.

- G. David Brooks, NY Times Op-ed columnist, in his book: "The Second Mountain" states this awakening he had:

One morning I was getting off the subway in Penn Station in New York at rush hour. I was surrounded as always by thousands of people, silent, sullen, trudging to work in long lines. Normally in those circumstances you feel like just another ant leading a meaningless life in a meaningless universe.

Normally the routineness of life dulls your capacity for wonder. But this time everything flipped, and I saw souls in each one of them!!

It was like suddenly everything was illuminated, and I became aware of an infinite depth in each of these thousands of people. *They are living souls!* Suddenly it seemed like the most vivid part of reality was this: Souls waking up in the morning. Souls riding the train to work. Souls yearning for goodness. Souls wounded by earlier traumas. Souls in each and every person, illuminating them from the inside, haunting them, and occasionally enraptured within them, souls alive or numb in them; and with that came a feeling that I was connected by ethereal waves to each and every one of them -- some underlying soul of which we were all a piece.

I suddenly regarded the whole crowd with a kind of awe, a reverence, not from the depth of a particular morning but from the depth of centuries.

Think about that for a bit, ... you are confronted by the possibility that we are connected not just with the souls living now, but with the souls of all the people who have ever lived, from generation to generation, who are still present today because this underlying animating spirit is still and always ... omnipresent. And if there are these souls, it's no mystery that there is something within; The breath of life flowing through us through an act of love and compassion.

Could you, would you try to, "see" everyone as an embodied soul?

I've come to the age now where I see how short a time we have to be here. And when I think about it, it can seem strange that at this particular gathering of us souls should be here, in this particular place, in this particular time.
. . . Truly a community of kindred souls.

I think of the other times and places I have lived, the other kind of person I might have become. But thank You Jesus, You have brought me back to this time and place.

There are moments when the heart becomes more tender, and then it knows that our lives are woven together, here, one with the other. within this place, with all the living, and with all the departed, as it was with Mary. A deep experience of the mystery of God's Kingdom.

Praying for One Another

- *Jaylyn Rhinehart's mother Jill Durham passed away after a long cancer battle*
- *Gene Fields, Matt's father, hernia surgery options*
- *Heather Martin, recovering from successful surgery*
- *Elizabeth Jones, making remarkable recovery at MCE*
- *Becky Callendar, friend of Paul Owens, recovering from lung cancer surgery*
- *Jan Smith from Faith Church continuing treatments*
- *Christina Cuddihy, as she continues her treatments*
- *Sarah Cory and Guy Cory as they contend with all they are facing*
- *Brady Martin, 10-year old struggling with leukemia*
- *Gary Stammer, amazing recovery from pancreatic cancer treatments*
- *Eileen Moffo, mother of Carla Jay, as they found a mass on her liver*
- *Community Focus: Schools and Staff as new school year looms with risks*
- *National Focus: Resurgence of COVID-19 via Delta Variant*
- *World Focus: planet in distress with wildfires, floods, hurricanes, etc.*

Tools for Schools: We are starting to collect for Tools for Schools. We will have the box at worship wherever we are worshipping. The Tools for Schools (TFS) program provides students with school supplies and backpacks throughout the school year. This is offered to students attending Canal Winchester or Bloom Carroll Schools. During July and August collection boxes are placed at various churches and organizations to gather additional supplies.

Grandparent's Day

Grandparent's Day is Sunday, September 12th. We are asking folks to submit pictures of your family (it would be great if you're in the picture too!) and grandchildren. We will prepare a slide presentation for that Sunday. If at all possible, please share the pictures digitally.

Men's Breakfast will not resume its monthly gathering until September 11.

Outdoor Worship and Picnic: on Sunday September 19 we will have a special outdoor worship experience and a church-wide picnic! Put this on your calendar now as we will have all kinds of special features that morning!

A Look Ahead

The following is a sketch of some of the highlights in the coming months. More details for each event will follow.

September 12 ***Grandparent's Sunday***

September 19 ***Outdoor Worship and Church Wide Picnic*** at Home of Paul Owens

September 19 Start of ***Season Two of The Chosen*** at Faith Church

October 1-2 ***Trash and Treasure Sale*** at Hope Church

October 16 ***Chili-Cook Off and Game Night*** at Faith Church

Come and See!

The Chosen is a steaming multi-season TV show about the life of Jesus, seen through the eyes of those who knew him best.

After this evening, we will have finished Season One as a group, but will be continuing on with Season 2 of ***The Chosen*** starting **Sunday, Sept 19th at 6:00 PM** and we would love for you to join us.

For those who haven't seen Season 1 or can't make it on Sunday nights to join us, there are several ways to still experience this powerful show. The show is free to watch. You can:

1. On a computer: go to <https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>
2. On a iPhone: open the App Store app, search for "The Chosen" and then press the get button. If you have a newer smart TV, you can then cast the video to television. This video explains how: <https://youtu.be/Mcq-5DCuLaU>
3. On an Android phone: open the Play Store App, search for The Chosen, tap Install. If you have a newer smart TV, you can then cast the video to television. This video explains how: <https://youtu.be/Mcq-5DCuLaU>
4. If none of those options work for you, we have some DVD copies of Season 1 you can borrow. We only ask that when you are finished, that you return them so that others can watch.

Matt Fields

Grief Seminar

"Ponderings on The Journey"

Seminar for anyone who has experienced grief or loss in life

Saturday, August 28, 2021

10 AM – 12 PM

Peace United Methodist Church

235 Diley Road

Pickerington, OH 43147

Leader – Rev. Elaine J. Sturtz

LPCC (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor)

Author – Living In The Different

Former Hospice Chaplain & personally walked the grief journey

www.livinginthedifferent.com

No cost or registration – just come! All are welcome