



## *Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

September 12, 2021

\*Call to Worship

*“My times are in Your hand.  
Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints!  
For the Lord preserves the faithful  
Be of good courage,  
And He shall strengthen your heart.  
All you who hope in the Lord.”*

\*Hymn of Praise

*“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”*

UMH 400

\*Opening Prayer

*Almighty God; We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large.*

*And finally, that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

(George Washington's prayer for our nation June 8, 1783)

#### 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.*

#### We Bow Our Hearts in Prayer

*We bow our hearts before You, Father God.  
You are the Creator of everything we see  
in heaven and on earth.*

*We pray that out of Your glorious, unlimited resources,  
You would strengthen our hearts and minds  
through the power of Your Holy Spirit.*

*May Your love be the rich soil in which our lives are rooted.  
May Your love be the firm foundation on which we build,  
so that, together with all Your people everywhere,  
we would come to truly understand how long, how high,  
how wide and how deep Your love really is—  
how it far surpasses anything we can imagine.*

*God, fill us with the fullness and the power  
that comes from You alone,  
so that our lives would reflect your goodness and grace  
to the world around us. 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

Ephesians 3:14b-19

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

Message

***"Road to Freedom"***

Tom Helber

\*Hymn of Faith

*"O Master Let Me Walk With Thee"*

UMH 430

Blessing

*Go out into the world.  
Seek God, and the wisdom of God.  
Hide yourself from the corruptions of power and adulation.  
Entrust whatever you have to Christ  
for with him, there will always be more than enough.*

*And may God strengthen you in your inner beings.  
May Christ Jesus dwell in your hearts through faith.  
and may the Holy Spirit plant your roots deeply  
in the abundant richness of God's love.*

## **“Road to Freedom”** (Ephesians 3:14b – 19)

Tom Helber

From Genesis (17:5-7) When Abram was named Abraham by God with the promise of an everlasting covenant for him and his descendants after him in all their generations culminating in Revelation (12:11a) **“Declaring the ultimate victory in Christ Jesus”**

- A. Of our sinfulness and contact with God ... Jesus said: **“I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you.”** (Revelation 3:20). It is that we first encounter Jesus and then in contrite recognition of our sinful nature, and in remorse for our sins ask for forgiveness. Consider the lost sheep of the 99, it wandered away and The **Shepherd** went looking for it to bring it back. It’s “lost” status did not keep the **Shepherd** away. Like the *Hounds of Heaven* He pursues us.
- B. Repentance would be better defined not by saying: “O my God, I am sorry for my sins,” but rather by this: **“O my God, I love You with all my heart and all my soul and all my strength.”** Therefore, the **FIRST** order is to be brought **face-to-face** with the **love of God in Christ Jesus** and to that we humbly bow and surrender to His love. It is in that encounter we then realize our sinful self and seek redemption ... and therefore, **FREEDOM!**
- C. There are these texts that have graces like love, gratitude, and sorrow for sin in the encounter with Jesus: the parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32); when Jesus speaks with Peter at the seaside breakfast (John 21:15-19) and the conversion of Paul (Acts 9:1-22). (***Place yourself in these scenarios and sense Jesus’ tenderness!***)
- D. Sin is no obstacle to God’s grace; God can always reach us. However, **a real obstacle to grace is a sense of unworthiness**. No matter what the sin, all people could have the experience of Paul, but they block themselves by the attitude that they are so unworthy. Paul took 3 days of isolation and introspection!

I was reminded of the encounter I had with The Presence of Jesus when on my Emmaus Walk experience I knelt down in the communion and felt His full acceptance and love for me. It was in that realization of His overwhelming love that I realized my sinful state, but also realized that my sins had been forgiven and I was restored ... and **set free!** I’ve had moments since then of feeling unworthy and ashamed of my failings (that I still make today), but I’ll not forget how Jesus’ dying for my sins has restored me to Him and will be forever indebted to Him with a grateful and obedient heart. **No longer ashamed, but certainly conducting myself in deep humility in His Presence.**

- E. Another deterrent to fully realizing the love God showers upon us is the fear that coming to Jesus and giving our life to Him is going to mean He is going to make “demands” of us. But we should not take it as giving in to the demands of Christ, **instead give in to the demands of our own love for Him**, because if you give in to His demands when you don't have much love within yourself to start with, you will resent Him.

What do I love when I love God? Not physical beauty or beauty of a temporal order, not the brilliance of earthly light, so welcome to our eyes, not the sweet melody of harmony and song, not the fragrance of flowers, perfumes, and spices, not limbs such as the body delights to embrace. It is not these that I love when I love my God, and yet, when I love Him it is true that I love a light of a certain kind, a voice, a perfume, a food, an embrace. But they are of the kind that I *love with my inner self*, when my *soul is bathed in light that is not bound by space*, when it *listens to a sound that never dies away*, when it is a fragrance that is not carried away on the wind, when it tastes food that is never consumed with eating, when it *clings to an embrace from which it is not severed by fulfillment of desire*. This is what I love when I love my God. Above all else: Love God!!

Put yourself in those times of Jesus' ministry on earth as being a part of those gathered, and ask what it is that you see, what do you hear, what do you sense of the setting?

- F. To choose things only for God and in God we need to be ready to surrender even seemingly good things. Only 'that' attitude will bring true freedom and lasting peace. The heart is to acquire an affective, *emotional indifference*, only this will help rid oneself of **inordinate attachments**. Once this has been accomplished one's soul will be in a position to seek and find the will of God.

We should **pray until the Lord changes our desires**. We can do nothing until we have changed our attachments, in other words, until the heart is changed. All desires, all attachments are to be solely for the glory and honor unto God.

The more we grow in spiritual maturity, the more we are aware of those movements that are going on deep down within us. It is essential to get in touch with and discern our spiritual interests.

The main point is the need to be open to the human situation in every problem that comes up for discernment. But wait!! The human situation is not quite as human as we might think; it is also *divine*. God is **in the human!** ***Explore that! Put your mind to understanding that!***

If one is in desolation, he should be mindful that God has NOT left him to his natural powers to resist the different agitations and temptations of the enemy in order to try him. (Like Job) He can, we can resist with the help of God, **which always remains**, though he may not clearly perceive it. (Though we may think we can resist the forces of evil on our own, and so try; God is always with us!)

We are *never* so abandoned that we do not have help from God, even though we may not clearly perceive this. The spiritual person is never without consolation. If we are patient with ourselves and will look kindly upon ourselves that is one effective way to overcome desolation.

- G. "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20) As long as you have an "I" to protect and interests to look after, then you are in trouble and are never completely and totally at peace. The more we may try to stifle the interest in the "self" the stronger it becomes because we still maintain an awareness of it.

What we need is the ***state of thoughtlessness***, the ***state of illumination***, or the ***state of love*** where we melt into another persona (the loss of one's self into an "**other**" state).

The "self" has a reality of its own, one that is beautiful, charged with God's glory and having its rights and its needs. When those needs are met we can transcend self. Having transcended it into a greater beauty; one that is of the mystical and of **the divine**. It is a complete surrender and going out unto Christ, a complete ***identification with Christ***, a new found Freedom. (from Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius By Anthony DeMello)

## **Genelle's story**

Of all the answers to prayer for deliverance and safety none is more remarkable than that of a young woman named Genelle Gilman, whose prayer, whispered from beneath tons of concrete and steel, resulted in an unforgettable story of God's delivering power.

The second youngest of thirteen children, three of whom died in childbirth, Genelle grew up on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. Though her mother was a devout Catholic, Genelle disliked church, thinking it a waste of time. As the youngest girl in the family she chafed at living in a house with so many people and so many rules to follow.

At age 24 and urged by friends and family already living in New York she moved there in 1998. She got a job as an office worker assigned to the Tunnels, Bridges, and Terminals Department of the Port Authority of New York. On the morning of September 11, she got to

work a little after 8 a.m. and rode the elevator up to the sixty-fourth floor of the north tower of the World Trade Center, where she had worked for the last nine months. Most of the staff wasn't in yet. Genelle says she was making small talk with a coworker when suddenly the building began to shake. What was that! Genelle wondered? An earthquake in lower Manhattan? She had no idea that American Airline Flight 11 had just slammed into the building. When I looked out the window to see what was going on, I could see bits of paper and debris floating down from above.

A co-worker shouted that a plane had hit the building. Genelle said she pictured a little private plane, not a jetliner. Because she didn't think we were in any real danger, she was surprised to see people grabbing their stuff and heading for the elevator. One man had already called the Port Authority police downstairs, who assured them things were okay, and that we should stay put and not leave. Genelle walked over to Rosa Gonzalez's cubicle, her closest friend at work, and by now Rosa was in a panic. She and Genelle finally headed out but then discovered the elevators were no longer working. Worse yet they heard there was smoke on the stairs.

She said she didn't know what to do. Should she stay put and wait for help or try to get out? Being too scared to leave on her own, she decided to stick with the folks who were still on the floor. Whatever they decided, she was going with them. There were fifteen people in all. Someone turned on the television in the conference room and they could see that their building was on fire.

Suddenly the building began swaying and rocking. They couldn't believe it. A second plane had hit the south tower! "Oh my God," Genelle said "the building is going down!" At about that time smoke began pouring into our floor, so someone taped off the lobby doors and the rest of us ran around wetting down sweaters and jackets to block off the doorways and keep the smoke out. By then, only about half the lights on the floor were still working and the smoke was getting thicker. That's when one of the guys said, "Listen, it's been an hour and no one has come to help us. We've called 911, the Port Authority police, but nothing has happened. We have to leave."

About that time we heard another huge noise. The building was swaying and shaking again. This time Genelle said she was sure we were all going to die. I didn't know that the south tower had just collapsed and that it would only be a matter of minutes before the north tower would go down as well. As soon as things settled, we removed the garments placed by the doorways and headed down the stairways. Rosa and Genelle held hands, crying and shaking. They kept counting the stairs ... 63, 62, 60 ... 50, 49, 48. We passed firefighters heading up the stairs. Some of them had stopped to rest, weighed down by heavy hoses and equipment. They told us to keep going, that we'd be alright. By the time we got to the 30th

floor, I thought they might be right. Then we hit the 15th floor and my shoes were killing me, but I didn't dare stop. By the time we hit the 13th floor I couldn't take it anymore, as I leaned over to remove my shoes, the whole place just went **boom!**

*Everything went completely black. It felt as though something had just hit me in the chest. Rosa and I fell back toward the wall, and then I fell toward the floor. Everything was crumbling around us. It seemed like a dream. I told myself it was. I tried to get up but something hit me and I fell straight to the floor again. By now it was pitch black. I couldn't see a thing. My eyes and mouth were filled with grit and dust. One hundred ten floors were coming down around us. I knew I was being buried alive. The noise was deafening!*

Finally things got quiet, really quiet. I couldn't believe I was still breathing — lying on my right side, with my right leg pinned beneath something. I tried moving my head, but my hair, done up in cornrows, was pinned under the concrete.

I knew then I was going to die. Nobody was going to find me under all the steel and concrete. I started calling out for Rosa, but there was no response. Then I heard a man crying, "help, help, help." His voice grew fainter, and then there was nothing.

There in the dark, my mind started racing. I thought of my children, my family. More than anything, I worried about what would happen to me after I died. I didn't know how to ask for forgiveness, I was sure I was going to hell. I was in and out of consciousness. Every time I woke up, I tried removing the rubble with my left hand, the only part of me that could still move freely. But there was too much. My head was starting to swell, and I wanted so badly to get it free of the concrete, pushing forward and then backward, but the space was too small. That's when I started to pray, "**God, I can't take this pain. Help me get my head free of the concrete.**" Then I made one hard pull, yanking upwards. I could feel the cornrows ripping from my scalp. My head was bleeding, but at least it was free.

As I explored with my free hand, I realized I was trapped under a stairwell. By then my right foot had started to swell, and I could feel iron and steel sticking into my side. I kept trying to remove the rubble, but it was too heavy and hard. Everything was so hard. Suddenly my hand brushed against something soft. It was a body. A man's leg. Oddly, it didn't frighten me. I was just glad for the chance to rest against something soft. And I fell asleep.

When I woke again I told myself I had to do something. But what could I do? "**God, you've got to help me!**" I prayed. "**You've got to show me a sign, show me a miracle, give me a second chance. Please save my life!**" My eyes were so caked with grime that the tears couldn't come, but I felt it in my heart. I was talking to God as though He was right there. I told Him I was ready to live my life the right way. "**Lord, just give me a second chance, and I**

**promise I will do Your will.”** I fell asleep praying the words, and when I woke up I kept praying for a miracle. **The more I prayed, the less I thought about the pain in my foot and my side.** After a while it got so cold that I knew night had fallen,. I was freezing, and still no one had found me.

The next day I heard a beep-beep sound like a truck backing up. I called for help, but there was no response. I could hear people talking on a walkie-talkie, so I called out again and again. Nothing! Finally someone hollered back: “hello, is somebody there?” “Yes, help me! My name is Genelle, and I’m on the 13th floor,” I cried, not realizing how ludicrous the information about my location must have sounded, coming from a pile of rubble.

I could see a bit of daylight coming through a crack, so I stuck my hand through it. **“Can you see my hand?”** I yelled, nearly out of strength. No, they saw nothing. I asked again, stretching my hand as far as I could. But they still couldn’t find me. I lost consciousness.

When I woke, I could hear that my would-be rescuers were above me. **“Please, God, show me a miracle now! Please help me!”** I prayed. So I stretched out my hand as far as I could, **and this time someone grabbed it.** *“Genelle, I’ve got you! You’re going to be all right. My name is Paul. I won’t let go of your hand until they get you out.”*

Oh, thank God! Finally, someone has found me. **“Thank you God!”** I tried to see who it was, but my eyes were so encrusted that I couldn’t make out a face, though I could feel his hand on mine. **As soon as he grabbed my hand I felt complete calmness throughout my body. Paul kept telling me I would be alright, and I believed him.** I kept his name in my head because I wanted to meet him when I got out of there, to thank him.

I could hear men moving steel and concrete above me, trying to get to me. Finally, two men took hold of my shoulders and Paul let go of my hand. They put me on a stretcher and then passed me hand to hand up and down a long line of people. When the sunlight hit my face, I saw them all lining the path, fireman and workers. Everyone was clapping. It had been **twenty-seven hours** since the towers collapsed. Of the fifteen of us who had tried to escape, only one other and myself had made it out. And I was the last to be found alive.

I spent five weeks in the hospital and underwent four surgeries on my right leg. But that day I wasn’t worried about what lay ahead. I was just happy to be alive. Though it was hard to spend so much time in the hospital because I was impatient to start living the life I had promised Christ I would live when I was buried under all that concrete. I wanted to go to church, to get baptized, restart living then right way so I told my boyfriend we would not live together anymore; that I’ve given my life to Christ and made a promise and I’m not going to go back on it.

My life was very different than it was before. The hospital staff worried about me. They wondered why I didn't seem depressed or fearful. Everyday a psychiatrist would visit me in my hospital room. He kept badgering me, saying he wanted to help me work things out. Are you having nightmares he even asked? No, not even one, I assured him. **I told him God above was my psychiatrist. After all, God was there when I needed Him. He had made sure I was found. He had comforted me and given me a new life.**

After I got out of the hospital, a reporter interviewed me along with some of the men who rescued me. When I asked about Paul, they seemed puzzled. There's no one named Paul on our team, one of them assured me. But I pressed them, **"someone was holding my hand for at least twenty minutes when you were digging me out. He told me his name was Paul. I kept reminding myself of his name because I wanted to thank him."** "I'm sorry", they said, "but nobody was holding your hand when we were removing the rubble."

I know that 'Paul' was God's answer to my prayer for a miracle, *a messenger of His love* in the midst of my pain. I don't regret the pain and suffering I've experienced, not for one day, because what happened to me was my wake-up call. Now I tell people, **"Tomorrow is not guaranteed to anyone. You don't know what's going to happen to you. Not many people get a second chance like I did. God saved me and He saved me for a reason. He heard my prayer and helped me to survive the worst kind of trouble so that I can live for Him today and tell others about what He's done in my life."**

**Behold we become a new creation; a resurrected life... and we are to live in unison with Jesus Christ.**

**As Jesus Christ is, so are we! The fruit of this transition, *this transformation*, is the encounter with the risen LORD, *THIS* is our road to freedom!**

closing prayer:

We humbly desire and live this other life we have come to realize as we have **"unselfed" the self**. Not through our own efforts nor designs ... we let it happen as God leads and shows us. It is God's gift to us that He is anxious to bestow upon us. Not through our merits, but through our surrender to Him. Grant us graces and understanding that we may so live as You guide us, without any taint of "self" nor physical desires nor hunger ... so let it be to us, Holy Father. In the precious name of Your Son, Jesus, we pray. Amen



- *Norma Jacks daughter Cindy at OSU Hospital*
- *Debbie Fields dealing with significant heart arrhythmia issues*
- *Dustin Bower, another elbow surgery scheduled for September 9*
- *Gene Fields, Matt's father, hernia surgery options*
- *Heather Martin, recovering at home; facing gall bladder surgery*
- *Elizabeth Jones, making remarkable recovery in a Rehab Hospital*
- *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*
- *Earl Kantner, declining with a variety of health issues*
- *Bruce Holloway, following surgery*
- *Community Focus: Schools and Staff as new school year looms with risks*
- *National Focus: Aftermath of Hurricane Ida in the Gulf Coast*
- *World Focus: Those left in Afghanistan; small band of Christians still residing in Afghanistan*



***Next Sunday***

### ***Outdoor Worship and Picnic***

*Next Sunday September 19 we will gather at the home of Paul Owens 5505 Hayes Road, Groveport, OH. Come a little early so we have time to get settled. Worship begins at 10:00 AM. We will have a special outdoor worship experience and a church-wide picnic! The Hope and Faith Choir will be singing.*

*Bring your favorite picnic dish to share with others. Table service, drinks, condiments will be provided. **Bring your most comfortable lawn chair.** We will have a drop-off area for those that need assistance from your car to our seating area.*

### ***Directions***

*Take Gender Rd. south until it dead ends into Lithopolis Rd. Turn right. Next turn left onto Hayes Rd. 5505 Hayes is on the left and has a long driveway back to the house. **Maps are available in the Welcome Area.***

***If it's raining or excessively hot and humid, we will worship as usual at Hope and reschedule the picnic.***

**Attention Choir members and Future Choir Members:** *The Hope/Faith Choir will begin practicing on this Wednesday September 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Hope Church. We will sing for the Sunday worship service on September 19, 2021. We are looking forward to a great “choir” year of sharing our voices during our worship services. Any questions, please contact Dwight or Theresa Snowden.*

**Hopeful Hearts:** *Hope’s baby clothing ministry has shifted to winter clothes but finds itself extremely low on clothing due to the pandemic dynamics. We urgently need donations—even new clothes—for this vital ministry. Boys and girls clothing birth to five years old. You can bring it to church on a Sunday or drop off at Hope.*

**New Adult Sunday School Class** *starting October 3, led by Matt Fields and Tom Helber each Sunday from 9:00-9:45 AM. Watch for more details.*

**Trash and Treasure** *will be on October 1st & 2nd. The tables are now set up and Jan Baughman will be here Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 – 1:00 and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 – 4:00 for drop offs. Please do not leave items outside. If you need to drop off items at other times, or no one is at the church when you come, please call Jan at 614-837-3673 or 614-266-4845. You can also call Linda Fields at 614 570-3937. Both of us live close and can come let you in. For those of you who have keys to the church, please place your items in an obvious place.*

*Jan will also need plenty of help sorting and pricing items. Please give her help whenever you have time. Please hold off large items until the Thursday before the sale. The left over items will be picked up by the Kidney Foundation on the Monday following the sale. Linda Fields is in charge of the kitchen this year and is asking for donations for desserts. We would like to have lot of pies, a few cakes, and other desserts, but our pies have been a staple at the sale and are expected by our customers. We will also need plenty of help the week prior to the sale as we will be making our soups and sandwich makings.*