

January 26 Worship

Greeters- Nadine Callahan, Chris Kenney

Reader- Nadine Callahan

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; for thee I wait all the day long.”* Psalm 25:5

Opening Scripture- Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10(page 420)

Opening Chorus- 22- Bless His Holy Name

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: All heaven and earth proclaim the majesty of God’s creative power!

People: Praise God for the amazing and awesome beauty.

Leader: God has given to us codes by which to live together in harmony and peace.

People: In these commandments, God has summed up the ways we must respect one another.

Leader: Rejoice in the goodness of God.

People: Praise God for God’s complete and steadfast love for us. Amen.

Hymn- 111- How Great Thou Art

Unison Prayer- Lord God, our Father, no one has ever seen you but you have shown yourself to us in your beloved Son Jesus Christ. Help us to recognize his face in the poor and the humble. Do not allow us to overlook him in the brokenhearted and the weak. Let the Holy Spirit give us the courage to bring his good news of hope and joy to all who wait for him and need him, whether they know it or not. We ask this through Christ our Lord who taught us to pray, saying....*Lord's Prayer...*

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 19:1-9(page 473-474)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Luke 4:14-21(page 892)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 671- In Christ There Is No East Or West

New Testament Scripture- 1 Corinthians 12:12-31(page 999-1000)

Message

“Did He Really Say That?”

As soon as Jesus returned from His 40 days and nights in the wilderness following His baptism, He immediately began to teach in the synagogues in Galilee. According to the gospel of Luke, Jesus was well received and glorified wherever He went. It was only when He returned to His home town of Nazareth that He ran into trouble. At first, the people were amazed at what He said and seemed to be in agreement with Him but then something happened to turn them against Him. Jesus used the words of scripture from Isaiah to declare Himself as a prophet above and beyond who Isaiah and Elisha were said to be. Jesus used the scriptures to proclaim the truth. Not the truth as the leaders of the faith saw it, but the truth as proclaimed by God. In effect, Jesus placed Himself above those in power. The crowd in Nazareth actually went so far as to take Jesus outside of town with the purpose of executing Him but Jesus simply walked away.

Speaking the truth does not always go over well. I'm sure that we all know the saying; “The truth hurts.” The truth can also result in anger with those who sometimes believe things that are not really true. Accepting ideas as truth just because that is the popular way of thinking does not make those ideas true. Some have said the truth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Understanding the truth is far more than simple honesty. We can honestly believe something that in reality is not the truth. According to the Merriam- Webster dictionary, truth is defined as; 1. “the body of real things, events, and facts.” 2. “the state of being the case.” 3. “a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality.” Scripture reveals truth as a moral concept rooted in God's character. He is called the “God of Truth” in many verses of scripture. Psalm 119:160 says it this way; “The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endures for ever.”

There are three types of truth; actual truth, perceived truth, and truth as seen by others. Actual truth, the only absolute truth, is the kind of truth that cannot be changed no matter how much we would like for it to be so. Perceived truth is what we believe to be true from our own personal ideas or from what we think we see. Truth as seen by others is what different people find true despite what others may have seen or believe. There was a time in history that all scholars and scientists lived by the “truth” that the earth was a flat, circular surface. In the 6th century BC, the Greek philosopher Pythagoras made the heretical observation that the world was really a sphere. Aristotle made the same observation 150 years later. It wasn't until Columbus sailed to North America that the scientific elite were forced to accept the truth that not only were they wrong, the world was not flat.

We have all looked at what are called optical illusions. These are pictures that may show something that in reality does not exist or may fool the mind into seeing different things than what we first see. It is our perception that makes us see something where nothing may exist. The human brain takes what looks like something and we believe that it is so. When we look closer, we find that the brain has been fooled into seeing a false image. The line between what we see and what is true can be a tricky object.

Finding that delicate balance between what we think is true and what is actually true is often times confusing. There are certain things that are true no matter how much we try to make them not true. There was a time when we thought that the earth was the center of the universe and the sun and every other planet revolved around it. Copernicus, a 16th century astronomer and

mathematician, was the one who discovered that the earth was not the center of the universe and that the earth revolved around the sun while the solar system moved through the heavens. His discovery was argued over for almost a hundred years before being accepted. Many scientific truths have been proven untrue over the centuries and we find that even today, what was thought to be fact last year is no longer the same.

When it comes to our faith, we must be careful to not make declarations of truth when it comes to other people's beliefs. Our faith depends on belief in things unseen and unproven. It is the same with other faiths. We believe what we do because we have a set of books that we believe were given to us by God. To those who are Christian, this is the truth as we perceive it. We take what we read in the scriptures as God's Word and we believe, God does not lie to us. To someone of another faith it is not the same. They have their books and claim the same things we do as to their truth. It is their right just as it is our right to believe as we see fit. God has told us to preach His word to the world so that they may be made aware of it. We were not told to force anyone to follow Christ, we simply are to share and allow others to make up their own mind.

When we say that God is truth, we are acknowledging that truth itself proceeds from the nature of God. To us, as Christians, while many things can have truth, only one thing can be the truth. That one thing is God Himself. The scriptures refer to this fact about God directly in a number of places. For example, Jesus said; "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Jesus went on to call the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth." (John 14:17) In the scriptures there is a synonymous relationship between righteousness and the truth, and between unrighteousness and falsehood. We need to understand that God's moral attribute of truth is also tied to His attribute of holiness. We accept the Holy Bible, the Word of God, as our rule and guide for living as God wants us to. The "Statement of Faith" of this church says this; "We are united in striving to know the will of God as revealed to us through the authority of the Holy Scriptures (consisting of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant and infallible Word of God), and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us."

God did not give us His Holy Word for nothing. It is meant to show us that God does exist and that His love for us is eternal. It is, for those who believe, the truth as God proclaims it. It is not meant for us to have someone else teach us from these books, it is meant for us, individually, to read and pray over and come to a decision as to what we take from God as the truth, in His words and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Anything that I, or any other preacher says, must be compared to what the Bible tells you. You make the decision; What is the truth. Did God really say that? Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- Truth-telling Saviour, You gather your people into one Body; gathering us beyond the divisions we create by our fears that it is all up to us to make our lives count; divisions we create in our anxiety to make the future turn out right. Crucified and risen Savior, You are among us, offering us your truth that sets us free; and your grace that shapes a good future for all; and your love that fills our lives and lifts us up. These gifts draw us ever deeper into your creative presence; these gifts that form us into a people who carry your life-giving future in our world. Open our eyes to their liberating truth. Open our hearts to receive them. By your Holy Spirit, form in us a passion for your purposes, a passion that overcomes our

self-centredness; a passion that makes us large in generosity. Then, grant us your Spirit of wisdom, that we may see the work you are doing and may join in with glad and grateful hearts and be the blessing you have summoned us to be. We ask in the name of Jesus whose death and resurrection has made us people of hope. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 337- Blest Be The Tie That Binds

Benediction- May the holy wisdom of God guard your ways and guide your paths. May the living truth of God enlighten your hearts and open your minds and may the living Spirit of God give you life, and life to the full! Amen!