

May 3 Worship

Reader- Jim Simmons, Alexander Parkhurst

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“He who gives heed to the word will prosper, and happy is he who trusts in the Lord.”* Proverbs 16:20

Opening Scripture- Psalm 31:1-5(page 479)

Opening Chorus- 98- Be Still And Know

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Praise the Lord, who has shown us the wonders of his unfailing love.

People: Who, for the sake of his name, leads us and guides us.

Leader: In you, O Lord, we put our trust.

People: You are our God, and our lives are in your hands.

Leader: Lord, let the light of your face shine on us

People: We celebrate together in your presence. Amen.

Hymn of Praise- 31- To God Be The Glory

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- Almighty God, you have built your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Join us together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may become a holy temple, acceptable to you: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray...*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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

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- Proverbs 30:2-6(page 571)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- John 14:1-14(page 938-939)

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

Hymn- 342- How Firm A Foundation

New Testament Scripture- 1 Peter 2:2-10(page 1058-1059)

Message

“Do You See What You Think You Saw?”

In our gospel reading this morning, Jesus is attempting to teach His disciples regarding what was going to happen in the coming hours. He told them that He was going to leave them and go where they could not yet follow. The disciples immediately began to question Him and doubt what Jesus was claiming. Peter wanted to know why he could not follow Jesus and said that he would die for Him. He wasn't very happy when Jesus told him that Peter would deny him three times before the next morning. Thomas wanted to know how they could follow Jesus since they didn't know where He was going. Philip asked Jesus to show them who God was even after Jesus had told them time and again that He, Jesus, was of God. Jesus would, in the coming days, show them and allow them to see with their own eyes, the truth in what He was saying to them.

There are times in our own lives that we, each one of us, see things with our own eyes and refuse to believe they happen. We cannot accept that what we witness actually happened right there in front of us. How many of us have seen something and then had to convince ourselves that it was real? The old saying, “Seeing is believing” may, at times, force us to question if certain things are true or simply imagined. The question of whether God expect us to believe what we see is a complex one that involves faith, evidence, and personal responsibility. The Bible teaches that faith is not blind but rather a response to evidence and revelation from God. Hebrews 11:1 states, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," indicating that faith involves evidence, even if that evidence is not always visible to the human eye.

The phrase “blind faith” means different things to different people, and, sadly, many people use it as a negative, disparaging term to describe anyone who believes in God. A dictionary definition of blind faith is “belief without true understanding, perception, or discrimination.” But is this the kind of faith God desires us to have? More to the point, is the kind of faith God gives us a blind faith? Is our faith really meant to be blind, without true understanding? We are expected to trust God and

take Him at His word but God also expects us to use the gifts that He has provided; reason, wisdom and logic. These gifts allow us to make decisions on our own when it comes to issues of faith.

We are expected to act in faith on God's promises, but we do that from a position of trust based on all the knowledge we have of God. God has left evidence of His power everywhere we look, and it is left to us to make up our own minds as to where this power originates. No matter where we look, the clues are there to inform us that there is a power beyond our understanding that exists and works around and within us. If we simply observe what is all around us, we cannot deny that there is a power that intelligently designed this world. Those who believe that all of this is mere coincidence has not taken advantage of those gifts that we all have been given.

There was a time in my life when I questioned the existence of God and tried to convince myself that everything just existed for no particular reason. I spent a lot of time in the mountains of Colorado when I was playing in a band. We spent one summer playing in a town called Salida, at the end of the Arkansas Valley. When the weather was right, we would drive up on a plateau just outside of town and sleep under the stars. I recall that the night sky was so full of stars because of the altitude and clarity of the sky. We happened to stay awake all night watching the falling stars and when the sun came up in the Eastern sky, it was as if my eyes were opened for the first time and I could no longer deny the existence of a Creator and an intelligence far beyond my understanding.

If you doubt that God exists, take a good look at your children or grandchildren, or if you have neither, take a look at any child and then tell me God does not exist. Get up early and watch a sunrise or observe the sky as the sun goes down. Drive to the ocean and sit on the beach and look out to sea. Everywhere you look you will see evidence of intelligent design. Use those gifts of reason, wisdom, and logic and then tell me that God does not exist. There have been times in the past that God has revealed Himself more "visibly" to people. One example of this is at the time of the exodus from Egypt, when God revealed His care for the Israelites by sending the miraculous plagues upon the Egyptians until they were willing to release the Israelites from slavery. God then opened the Red Sea, enabling the approximately two million Israelites to cross over on dry ground. Then, as the Egyptian army sought to pursue them through the same opening, He crashed the waters upon them. Later, in the wilderness, God fed them miraculously with manna, and He guided them in the day by a pillar of cloud and in the night by a pillar of fire, visible representations of His presence with them. Yet, in spite of seeing first hand, with their own eyes, demonstrations of His love, guidance, and power, the Israelites still refused to trust Him when He wanted them to enter into the Promised Land. They chose instead to trust the word of ten men who frightened them with their stories of

the walled cities and the giant stature of some of the people of the land.

God has revealed enough of His nature for us to be able to trust Him. He has shown through the events of history, in the workings of nature, and through the life of Jesus Christ that He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-wise, all-loving, all-holy, unchanging, and eternal. And in that revelation, He has shown that He is worthy to be trusted. But, as with the Israelites in the wilderness, the choice is ours whether or not we will trust Him. Often, we are inclined to make this choice based on what we think we know about God rather than what He has revealed about Himself and can be understood about Him through a careful study of His inerrant Word, the Bible. If you have not already done so, begin a careful study of the Bible, that you may come to know God through a reliance upon His Son, Jesus Christ, who came to earth to save us from our sins, so that we might have sweet companionship with God both now and in a fuller way in heaven one day.

If we still cannot believe what God has shown us to be true, then we must consider ourselves as being blind to what is right before our eyes. We have the choice to see or not, what is before us. If we can honestly say; “Seeing is believing,” then we have no choice but to get on our knees and proclaim our faith. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- We give you all thanks and praise, O God, for you have made us your own, through Christ Jesus, and given us a new righteousness based on faith. You created the entire universe: the sky tells of your glory, day and night reveal the genius of your ways. You brought your people out of slavery and gave them your laws and commandments, that they might be rich in Spirit and clear in vision. Though we repeatedly rejected your ways and destroyed your messengers, you sent your Son to us to renew heaven’s call. Though the crowds recognized him as a prophet, those who coveted his inheritance seized and killed him. But you raised him from the dead, and now through the power of his resurrection he stands as the cornerstone of righteousness, the first fruits of the kingdom, and the incomparable prize towards which we press. Therefore, with our hearts lifted high, we offer you thanks and praise at all times through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Communion Hymn- 374- Here, O my Lord, I See Thee Face To Face

Thanksgiving Prayer- Dear Lord Jesus Christ, thanks and praise to you. Again you fed us at your holy table with your own body and blood. By your Word and Supper, may we be led from this world of sorrow into life eternal. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 12- How Sweet The name Of Jesus Sounds

Benediction- Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and in God's son, Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, and through whom we come to know the Father. And may the blessing of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit go with you as you leave this place. Amen.