November 8 Worship
Reader- Paul Mosher

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *"I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God."* Psalm 69:3

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Opening Scripture- Psalm 78:1-7(page 507)

Opening Chorus- 544- Seek Ye First

Responsive Call To Worship-
Leader: God has gathered us to this place.
People: Where we hear those stories which show us what the kingdom of God is like.
Leader: God summons us to this place.
People: Where we can learn how to serve our God without reservation, or hesitation.
Leader: God will send us from this place.
People: To tell others of God's hopes and dreams, so they, too, can choose to follow God.

Hymn of Praise- 400- Jesus Calls Us O'er The Tumult

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- You do not want us to be ignorant of your dreams and hopes for us, God of holiness, so you speak to us in parables, so we might pay careful attention to your words; you tell us stories about our grandparents in the faith, so we might become mentors to our grandchildren, and theirs. Filling us with the holy oil of generosity and grace, you make us ready to welcome Jesus Christ into our lives, and to open our hearts to those who are in need. On this day, we choose to serve you, God in Community, Holy in One, even as we pray as Jesus teaches us...*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- Psalm 70(page 503)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 25:1-13(page 860)

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

Hymn- 278- Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending

New Testament Scripture- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18(page 1030-1031)

Message

"What Are You Waiting For Anyway?"

I recently discovered an organization that seems like a perfect one for me. It is called "The Procrastinators Club of America" and it was founded in 1956 by business man Les Waas of Philadelphia, Pa. In 1987, Waas joked the club had "about a half-million members in the United States, although only about 5,000 have gotten around to joining." They have held several protests through the years such as the 1966 anti-war protest against the "War of 1812, which they called a success because it produced a treaty with England. They also sued the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in 1976, during the Bi-Centennial for the defect in the Liberty Bell. The foundry told the protesters that it would be glad to replace the bell, so long as it was returned in the original packaging.

We can joke about procrastination but it does have serious consequences. There are many quotes from famous people about this condition; "Never leave that to tomorrow which you can do today."(Benjamin Franklin) "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."(Abraham Lincoln) "Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone."(Pablo Picasso) "Procrastination is one of the most common and deadliest of diseases and its toll on success and happiness is heavy."(Wayne Gretsky) There are many different quotes and perhaps I'll get to them someday.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins which was the gospel reading this morning, illustrates the danger of spiritual procrastination: the foolish virgins delayed preparation and missed the bridegroom's arrival. This underscores the need for readiness in faith, not waiting for the "perfect" moment, but acting now. While wishing that we had acted sooner in our faith journey and accepted Jesus at an earlier age, looking back on something with regret does us no good. The past is the

past and worrying will not change it. For those who are still waiting to find Jesus, I ask you one question. Why?

Perhaps more study is needed, or more proof must be found. Maybe we are tempted to follow Christ but there is something in the way. The gospel message is for young and old, for men and women of all races and cultures. But most who hear the message do not respond immediately. Some might not turn to God until they are well advanced in years. Humanly speaking, we can suppose many reasons for not responding to God till later in life, having a family or a career, wanting to travel, or pursuing any number of sporting or social activities. Some may think God won't mind waiting till their busy lives quiet down so they can spare Him some time. Others are too proud to acknowledge God. Some live comfortably by virtue of their own efforts, and they don't feel any need to turn to God. Some simply love their sin. And others are so convinced they are earning their salvation by good works they have not yet turned to God in faith. Whatever the reason, putting off what we know is right can be costly.

In my own experience, I knew full well that I should act on what was right in front of my face all along. From my earliest years, I was taught about God and the Bible. I attended many different kinds of worship, from my home church across the street to the many different military chaplains I was exposed to over the years. Even though there were varied forms of worship, they all contained a common theme, Jesus is the Messiah and through Him we gain redemption. So why did it take until I was in my 60's before I gave myself to Christ? My only answer to this is that it took God a bit longer to get through my thick head what it was He wanted me to do. It wasn't God's fault that I was so stubborn, I just wasn't ready. I give thanks daily that He didn't give up on me.

It has been said; It is never too late to find Jesus. I am here to tell you that in some cases time ran out for some. We all know someone who refused to accept the fact that God even exists. They may be great people and do the right things, but for the wrong reasons. I cannot stand here and say that they will not be accepted by God at the judgment, I can only relate to what the Bible tells me; "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) If we accept the Bible as truth, why are we waiting to do what it says must be done? God calls to us, but sometimes we don't hear. God calls to us, but sometimes we ignore it. God calls to us, but sometimes our pride gets in the way. For some, it takes a personal tragedy before they stop to re-evaluate their lives. For others, it takes a lesson in humility before they acknowledge their need. For all those reasons and more, some people take a while to get around to turning to God. The danger in procrastination is that time might run out. No one is guaranteed tomorrow.

The Bible urges us to get right with God today. “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. As has just been said: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion’” (Hebrews 3:12-13,15). To procrastinate and put off getting right with God is to harden one’s own heart.

We all know the feeling that comes when we do something to help others or when we go out of our way to serve a need in our community. When we do it just because it is right or when we do it with the thought of lifting up God and Jesus are two different feelings. When we do as Christ teaches and acknowledge God's grace, we are showing that we are willing and able to be ready for the coming Kingdom. I am not going to stand here and declare to you “Repent the end is coming,” but guess what, we all need to repent because the end is coming, we just don't know when.

If we know that living a life in accordance with God's Word is good for us, if we understand the need to live a righteous life, if we acknowledge that it is in our best interest to follow Christ, why are we procrastinating over giving our lives to Him and living up to our potential right now? Why wait for something that will change your life today? Well, maybe tomorrow, I still have things I want to do now. What if tomorrow never comes? To be honest, tomorrow will come but we might not be here to see it. If you know, today, that surrendering to Christ is going to be the most important thing you can do, what are you waiting for? Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- O Lord our God, we gather today before you, conscious of our many failings, including our failure to be faithful to your word. We are very conscious too, of our failure to share the good news of your merciful love and your gracious commitment to your creation, and to all humanity, whom you created with a divine spark to enrich and enliven them. Holy God, we seek your merciful forgiveness for our failure to share with our children, and our children’s children, the truths about you, your love, and your compassion that we are blessed to receive. We ask that you inspire us with a zeal for sharing the ‘good news’ of God; to encourage us in our stuttering attempts to tell others what God has done for us throughout our life; and to empower us with a clear understanding of our own faith and trust in you, and your ways of justice and peace. Unchanging God, help us to listen for the many tones and accents of God’s voice as it continues to sound softly and gently, or strongly and vibrantly through all time and eternity. Open our ears and our eyes to your presence with us each and every day so that we may recognize you at work in the lives of people within your gathered community; and in the way you, in your wisdom, use people to fulfill your purposes. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 327- Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing

Benediction- In the presence of the Lord we have reflected on his words about the wisdom of vigilance. What are we, foolish or wise? Probably a bit of the two: foolish when we sin, wise when we are vigilant and try to live a bit like Jesus and to put his words into practice. May almighty God keep you vigilant and wise and bless you: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Go in the peace of the Lord, and may he keep you always faithful. Amen.