

God of Healing and Restoration

January 22, 2017

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West Valley Presbyterian Church

Exodus 25:1-9 – Not Read

25 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. ³These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; ⁴blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁵ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; ⁶olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁷and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.

⁸“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. ⁹Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. ¹

Hebrews 9:1-15

9 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. ²A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. ³Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, ⁴which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

⁶When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. ⁷But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. ⁸The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. ⁹This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. ¹⁰They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

The Blood of Christ

¹¹But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, ^vhe went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. ¹²He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of

¹ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ex 25:1–9.

a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, ^h so that we may serve the living God!

¹⁵For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. ²

Kim: Intro and the Cross

[[slide]]God of Healing and Restoration[[end slide]]

We are taking a break from the fruit of the Spirit – hopefully not in practice but just in our sermon series.

We want to stay consistent with the Adult Ed...Since today is our healing service right after worship (and we ask that all of you stay) – we are going to talk a little bit about the theology around the symbols that you see in here each Sunday when you come to worship.

Todd and I are going to be walking around a little and sharing with you some reflections on why things are set up in the sanctuary the way they are. And I hope understanding some of this will enhance your worship experience.

One of the things that most moves me every Sunday when I walk in here is that I had chance to get to know Carroll McCune before he got ill. Carroll helped design this sanctuary and build this church. And when I first came on as Pastor here about 8.5 years ago, he would come and check up on me in the office. I know that he wanted to be sure I was doing my job, but he also would show up always with an encouraging word.

I soon became very fond of Carroll, and it was in one of our many conversations together that he shared with me his heart for Christ when he built this church. He told me that he had it constructed so that all of the steps...even those steps outside... would lead up to the cross.

He knew that the cross needed to be central, because everything about our faith as Christian centers on the cross of Christ. In Christ's death he took our sins that separated us from God on himself, so they we could have a restored relationship with God and be healed.

[[slide]] front cross image [[end slide]]



So the cross hangs here in our sanctuary as the prime focal point. Now some of you may have grown up churches where Jesus is hanging on the cross as an icon. And it's

important remember how much Jesus suffered for us – actually the Catholic has a very well thought out theology of suffering that we benefit from.

However in the Protestant church, for the most part, we have an empty cross. We have an empty because we want to emphasize the resurrection. God's victory over evil, over death. So when you walk in here on Sunday be aware that your steps lead you to the cross, and as they do they lead you to victory and God's love for you. *The cross is a great symbol of God's healing and restoration.*

TODD: (Bible/Word of God)

I wish that we could have the worship service in the afternoon. When the sun is just right, the cross just glows and the sunlight streams down upon the pews, upon where you are seated right now. You can see in your mind's eye how the cross represents both the transcendent nature, beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience, and how the shadow of the cross comes down to us and restores us to what we were made to be. The light that shines through cross represents God's Immanence, His presence with us in the world. It gives a physical reality to the meaning of John 1:4-5

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⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:4-5

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[[slide]] image of bible on the table [[end slide]]



We emphasize how we know the light of the world, through the scripture. We always have a Bible on the table. It says

- This is what we believe in.
- This is what restores us.
- This is what gives us hope.

Psalm 103 says

- ¹ Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- ² Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.³

We place the Bible in this place of honor because it tells us where our hope is.

³ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ps 103:1-5.

KIM: Baptismal Font

In the Presbyterian Church we have two sacraments that we like to always keep visible before you as you worship. The definition of a sacrament is an outward visible sign of an invisible reality. There is mystery associated with the sacraments; in other words often people sense God's presence as they participate in the sacraments.

And sacrament is also symbolic.

[[slide]] Baptismal Font image [[end slide]]



One of those two sacraments is baptism. Baptism is something Jesus did, as an example, and something we are called to do as Christians, only one time.

Often people will come to me and say, "The Holy Spirit is leading me to get baptized." Its almost like when something happens in our heart that changes us, we want to do something on the outside that demonstrates that change.

The outward visible sign of baptism does not save us. Sometimes people think that if they have their children baptized that means eternal salvation for that child.

However, that is not what baptism means for us. For us, baptism is an outward visible sign of what has happened internally after we have asked Jesus Christ to come into our hearts and commit our lives to him. The water signifies the cleansing of our sins and a rebirth to new life in Christ.

Sometimes people say, "We shouldn't be baptized until we are adults and can make an audible confession of faith." We honor that perspective and we baptize adults here.

Other people say, "God accepts and receives us even before we can articulate our faith." We honor that perspective too, and, if parents know Jesus and promise to raise their child to know him, we will also baptize infants on the basis of their faith.

This goes way back to the agreement that God had with Abraham – that your generations will be blessed. It was an unconditional covenant arrangement.

Sometimes we refer to God's "Prevenient" grace when explaining infant baptism. Later we have confirmation when the child grows to about 13 years old and can confirm the faith for themselves that their parents raised them in.

Sometimes too other churches like Baptists use more water and actually dunk the person in the water as a sign of that death and rebirth. If someone requests this kind of a baptism we can do that too. But because we are Presbyterian, we are stingy, and only use a little water! *Baptism is an outside act of an invisible reality that points to God as healer and restorer of all humanity.*

Todd: Windows/Instrumentation

Our windows are made of stained glass. They are traditional in a place of worship going back a thousand years. They mark this room as a special place.

[[slide]] stained glass image with dedication [[end slide]]



If you walk around and look at each of these windows, you'll notice that all/most have a dedication on them. These are people to whom God was faithful in the past. The idea that God will heal and restore us is not an untried proposition. The church family who has gone before us are witnesses to God's faithfulness.

Palm 89 speaks of this:

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- ¹ I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.
- ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

Psalm 89:1-2

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These windows declare the witness of our predecessors that God's love stands firm forever.

Our confidence in the LORD is so great that we cannot help but sing our praise of God. We place these instruments—organ drums, piano—on the chancel—the raised platform in the front—to help us sing to God.

Singing to God to honor Him and to proclaim what he was done is an ancient practice. When God delivered the Israelites safely across the Red Sea, they sang their thanks:

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Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

“I will sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea.⁴

Exodus 15:1

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The Apostle James reminds us in James 5:13

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¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.

James 5:13

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No matter what your situation, sing songs of praise. This is why music is such a large part of WVPC.

[[slide]] Choir chairs image [[end slide]]



Not only do we have instruments to accompany us but we have a choir, members of this body who lead us in song. This church values the voice of everyone, not just the one. We sing together as the body of Christ, not as the lone individual sitting by themselves with others around them. God says that we should not be alone. The others around us are instruments of our healing and of our restoration.

⁴ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ex 15:1.

Kim: Second Sacrament – Lord’s Supper

[[slide]]Communion table image [[end slide]]



The second sacrament is the Lord’s Supper.

The Jews have a Passover Supper, and the last supper Jesus had with his disciples was Jesus celebrating that Passover supper with them. This Passover meal was to celebrate the Exodus of the Hebrew people from slavery to freedom. This is when the angel of death passed over the Hebrew people’s door when the blood of a young lamb was on it.

For the Christian, Passover evolved into communion, as people realized that Jesus was the Passover Lamb sacrificed for us on the cross; and that when we believe Jesus we too are rescued from death and set free.

Now, this sacrament we do continually – for us it is monthly as opposed to the sacrament Baptism that we do once. The Lord’s Supper we do continually - because we continually need to confess our sins and be assured of God’s forgiveness. Again, our taking “Christ in” is an outward visible sign of an invisible reality – our need for constant and continual forgiveness and restoration...

We need to renew our closeness to Jesus and continue to take him in always.

In very concrete symbols at this table, visible for all, God displays his love for us. Bread broken symbolizes his body broken for us on the cross. The cup of wine/juice that we pour symbolizes his blood poured out for us. We do not need to fear death... death passes over us...because of the blood of Jesus shed for us...

The table also represents community and fellowship together as a church and with God.

There could be no greater example of how our salvation is not about what we have done; it is all about what God has done for us in Jesus Christ because of his great love for us. *The bread and the cup: What great symbols of healing and restoration!*

Todd: Altar Cloth symbol & Pulpit

[[slide]] Table cloth image of dove [[end slide]]



On the table, we have a cloth with an image on it. This image adds to the canon of the beliefs that we hold dear. If the high ceilings remind us of God's grandeur and omnipotence, and the cross of Jesus's sacrifice for our sins, the dove reminds us of God's continuing presence. Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. That was not a onetime event but the Holy Spirit continues to be among us. The Holy Spirit is with each and every person in this room. The Holy Spirit heals us, teaches us and leads us so that we might be restored to communion with God.

There is also an image of three rings which are intertwined. This represents the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The belief in a Triune God is part of our belief. Although it has no analogue in nature, we believe that there are three persons in one God.

Jesus told us in Matthew 28:19 to

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¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Matthew 28:19

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God pulls out all the stops to draw us close to him. He is the perfect Father, a father that some of us have never experienced. He is Immanuel, God with us as a human being, Jesus who paid the price for our failings. He is the Holy Spirit, who is guiding us now and in the future.

[[slide]] Pulpit image image [[end slide]]



The last component of the sanctuary that we are going to talk about today is the spoken word of God, symbolized by the pulpit. Jesus said that the Gospel must be preached to all nations (Mark 13:10). As the Christian Church we proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, that He is LORD! That is good news. From this pulpit, we proclaim that the LORD delivers the weak and heals the sick. The emphasis upon the preached word is a distinguishing mark of the Protestant Church. It is the emphasis of a Sunday service.

You may notice that this pulpit is raised just enough so that you can see the preacher. It is not elevated as it is in some churches. We emphasize that the Gospel is not special knowledge that is dispensed from a position of authority from someone who is set apart and imposed upon us. It is a message from a friend, a person just like you who wants to share the treasure that they have found. It is a treasure that has healed them and restored their relationship with God.

Kim: Quick mention of the ceiling pointing upward and closing prayer on healing and restoration...(I do first part, you do second?)

[[slide]] Sanctuary interior[[end slide]]



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