

Trust

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

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[17:13] — — — — —

— — — Feel — — — of your love, of your justice, of your character, of your mission, and of your reign.

[35 : 34] May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, through us, alongside us, despite us, and for us. Amen.

You may be seated. We come for a time of prayer and celebration.

So I ask that you join your hearts with mine as we offer up our prayers this morning. Lord, we come here today in fellowship with one another, setting aside this timely solely for you.

We offer you praise and worship. We're here to listen to you speak to us. And leave here shaped a little bit more into your likeness.

We come humbly and quietly before you praying. We thank you for those times this week where we've smiled and laughed, those times of friendship enjoyed, of meals finally shared, those times when we appreciated the beauty of nature, when we felt a peace in our hearts, and when we paused to be grateful for the life that you've given us.

[36:58] For all these and so much more, we know that we are blessed. And in gratitude and joy, we pray for our days of difficulty and struggle, for the times that we have been less than our very best.

We give you thanks that you do not turn away from us and that we are never alone. The Bible tells us that when we confess our sins, you are gracious and just to forgive us, and you help us start anew.

So we pause in silence to personally confess our sins to you now. Lord, we lift up to you our church.

We want to be used by you to make a difference in the lives of others. The need for hope, acceptance, love, and compassion is great, and you are the answer to those needs.

Help us to show others the way through your programs, through our ministries, and most of all, through our lives as we set an example. Lord, we ask you to pray for those who are sick, suffering, lonely, misguided, or just in need of your presence.

[38 : 21] We ask that you would touch them with your healing, with your guidance, and with your peace. You have those people on our prayer list and whose names are in our hearts, and we ask your blessing.

Lord, we ask for those servicemen and women who are out there fighting, making our freedom possible. We ask for the confidence and joy and hope we have each day because we walk daily with you.

We give you thanks and praise in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. ...

... Good morning.

Good morning. And to those who may watch this later, good afternoon or good evening. Our scripture reading for this Sunday is Mark 6, verses 1 through 13.

[39 : 54] Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

Where did this man get these things, they asked. What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?

Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son? And the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?

And they took offense to him. Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives, and in his own home.

He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

[40 : 57] Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over impure spirits.

These were his instructions. Take nothing for the journey except a staff. No bread, no bag, no money in your belts.

Wear sandals, but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God. Is anybody planning any trips this summer?

[42 : 12] Anybody? Or have you already been on trips? Is that how you're going to pack? No extra clothes, no extra shoes, no money.

What do you think? Anybody up for that kind of traveling? I vote no. Part of what Jesus encountered in going to his own hometown was a lack of trust.

Do you think of yourselves as easily trusting people? Anybody? Hmm. Hmm. Hmm. Hmm. We are, and part of how this country was created, was, had that written all the way through it.

And people of faith, just like people everywhere, struggle with trust. How do you learn to trust? How do you learn to trust? And I'm just going to ask for a pop-up few words.

How do you learn to trust someone or something? What's that? Experience, attitude, the ability to know them.

[43 : 31] What's that? Keep a secret. We struggle at times. Relationship is a part of how we build trust.

As you've heard from these examples. If you want to build trust with someone or if for some reason you don't trust someone, sometimes we wipe the dust off our feet and we walk away.

Done. Sometimes, and I believe this is where God would lead us, is that we have a couple of choices. One is we go closer.

And we try to figure out, well, why don't I trust this? Now, if you're at Darien Lake or Disney World and you don't trust a ride, just don't get on it.

I'm telling you, just don't get on it. If somebody comes and offers you a ride in a car that's smoking and dragging pieces, don't get in it. But this isn't about those things.

[44 : 34] This is about relationships, people, faith, belief in God, and trust in God. I believe that it is a lifelong journey to learn to trust God.

And sometimes we don't learn to trust God until everything is taken away from us. By disease, by hurricane, by poverty, by loss, by simply being in that place where we have no supports, no crutches.

Now, in this part where one of the things that I think is clearly important in this passage is the part where he says to them, and I want to highlight this, and they took offense at him.

And second, he was amazed at their unbelief. These are the people that Jesus grew up with. These are the people in the community where he and his father were carpenters, where he and his mother Mary and his father Joseph and the siblings that are mentioned.

It's where they lived. And yet, when he went back, they didn't believe that he was who he said he was.

[46 : 11] How does that feel? Like, if Jesus grew up with you, and you knew it was Jesus when he came back as an adult to preach or teach or heal or baptize, would you be like, no way, this guy, we know him.

We've known him since he's a kid. We don't believe him. Maybe you would feel that way. My feeling is that if I knew it were Jesus, I'd be like, can I come to your house today and tomorrow and the next day, and could you preach on Sunday because I'd rather hear you preach than me preach?

We don't often have that opportunity to see Jesus physically. It's Jesus calling.

And the Holy Spirit glistening up here where the pool is reflecting on the ceiling. We do not hand over trust easily.

How many times throughout Scripture did we read about people surrendering themselves to God and saying, I'll do it, I'll go, I'll follow, except maybe I want to do this more.

[47 : 27] Or maybe I'll offer my child to be used by God and then take him back. Maybe I'll, in my mind, bring something to the altar and say, I give it to you, God, I give it to you, I give it to you.

And then when we're leaving, when we think nobody is looking, we take it back. Trust is not easy. So we jumped to the disciples who are going to be sent out.

And the one, thank you, Jesus, for part of this for me is that he sent them two by two. Because I, for one, I don't want to go by myself. Because there are times when you imagine yourself having to go to a home and find your own place to stay.

And you have to stay there for the whole time you're in the town. I want somebody else's opinion. What do you think? Does this look safe? What do you think? Do you think they'll welcome us? Do you think they'll feed us? Do you think there's a place for us to lay down?

We read about them being sent out. They were sent out to heal, to teach, to preach, to baptize, to anoint, to cast out demons, all of these things.

[48 : 43] But Jesus knew what it felt like to be rejected. He knew what it felt like to find that he could not, was not respected in his hometown.

So he equipped the disciples. And you might say, that's equipped. No extra shoes, no extra clothes, no money, no food. Find your own place.

Stay there the whole time. When I was looking to become a pastor, I'd finished one year of seminary. And I decided I wanted to come back to New York and figure out what it really felt like to be a pastor.

So I wrote the conference office. And they checked around. And the place that took me was two churches, Hedgesville and Jasper.

Anybody know where Jasper, New York is? Ha! Good job. Jasper is a United Methodist church down near the Pennsylvania line. And Hedgesville is a joint United Methodist and Presbyterian church that they were attached to each other.

[49 : 48] And the pastor serving them was a Salvation Army pastor. So I get there from Chicago to spend the summer and learn that I'm going to be farmed out every week to a different family.

That I'd never met. Sleep wherever they told me. They'd feed me. But there was no opportunity for, like, getting out.

And there was no two-by-two because I wasn't married yet. And so I went there and became, there was not a real understanding that I was not yet a pastor.

That I really didn't know how to do a lot of what a pastor does. But every night when I would, during those weeks when I would go to people's houses, I was the resident pastor.

Asked all the questions. Helped to understand everything. Some counseling. Some things. And it was exhausting.

[50 : 52] There was no rest. So finally, someone mentioned. It might be the person I'm now married to, who is my fiancé. This is really hard because she's working 24 hours a day, seven days a week in this role.

And couldn't you find at least one place where she could stay the rest of the summer? Well, out came somebody's Airstream trailer in their backyard. And that's where I parked myself for the rest of the summer.

So it's a little bit of knowing what it feels like to be sent. And not know where you're going to live. And not know if you're going to be paid any money or fed any food or whatever the case might be.

Most of us would say, pick someone else. I learned a lot that summer. But part of what I believe that Jesus was teaching the disciples is, you will be rejected.

Anybody here ever been rejected by a friend, a family member, or anybody that you're close to? Anybody ever been rejected? How'd it feel?

[52 : 09] Bad. It's hard. So part of what Jesus was teaching the disciples is, don't stay there. They didn't have Bibles back then.

Don't stay there and keep beating on the Bible or the Word of God and trying to convince them. Because the more you try to convince them, the more they're going to back up.

Because I can tell you that people are not one to Jesus Christ, one, W-O-N, one to faith by being beaten by the Scriptures. Threatened by the Scriptures.

People either grow in relationship and love in which the Scriptures are incorporated, or they don't. Scripture say that God will do God's work in God's own time.

So if we go and we plant seeds, sometimes just by showing up and loving and we're rejected, part of what Jesus is teaching is, don't stay there.

[53 : 21] Don't stay in a place that's hurting your faith. In the beginning of this one, they say they took offense at Jesus.

In some of the translations, it means it's the same word as Paul uses when he talks about stumbling blocks. And in Corinthians, Paul talks about stumbling blocks.

And he says one of the worst things that we can do is put stumbling blocks in front of someone as they are on their faith journey. And when Jesus went to his hometown, I'm telling you, they were throwing the big ones.

Because there were people watching. We don't believe you. We don't trust you. We are just Joseph. I mean Jesus, son of Joseph, son of Mary. You're just a guy.

Jesus needed to get out of town. Because the word of God could not be fruitfully proclaimed in that space. And so if we encounter people that are like, no, no, no, no, no, I don't want to believe it.

[54 : 30] I'm not going to believe it. I'm mad at God. I'm mad at the church. Whatever. And we've got a lot of that in the big church's history. Sometimes we don't necessarily wipe the dust off our feet and disappear.

We just back up in love. All we can do is offer. And sometimes all we can do is offer and pray that God will do the rest.

But Jesus is teaching the disciples, don't stay where you will be destroyed. Don't stay where relationships will become stumbling blocks in your faith.

Don't stay in places where you are clearly not welcomed, not loved, not treated as one who is called by God.

Don't stay in places where you are now in your faith. Don't stay in places where you are coming. Don't stay in places where you are coming. And we have a lot of those who are coming. Lots of levels. How long do you keep working?

[55 : 44] If people are receiving our friendship, our love, our care, our ministry, and our faith, because we teach them that just as Jesus has loved me and brought me from here to here, so that is available to you.

And if you want to talk about it any time, here I am. I can show you, I can talk to you, and I can listen. I think people don't fight that as much. Trust, trust, trust.

And growing trust in our church community, our church community, in which this church community has been through a lot of changes.

So how do we help people trust in this new day? By modeling trust. By trying to trust.

By asking questions. By sticking it out. By helping people who are not trusting yet with these new pastors and maybe need a little more support in realizing that change is hard, but that nothing terrible is going to happen here.

[57 : 03] That we will be blessed. We will be served. We will be fed. And that God will faithfully show us the way. So we are called to be disciples.

Just as Jesus called the disciples. And I could give you an example of, you know, I could have the pitcher ready for baptism, and I could have a cup of juice ready, and a loaf of bread ready, and oh, we have hand sanitizer, and I've got a Bible, and I've got, you know, the gluten-free and all that.

And I could try to carry all of that to offer to people I met. Do you know what I would be spending most of my time doing? Picking it up off the ground.

Because I would not be able to carry it and actually encounter people in relationship. So take little. Don't go overloaded.

Don't go as you watch on TV. Don't go as you watch anyone else here. Just go as yourself. And love God and love your neighbor.

[58 : 14] And if we can love God and love our neighbor, not because of what they believe or don't believe, but just love our neighbor, there's more potential for people responding.

How do you get through this life? How do you get through the trauma, the trouble, the illness, the children moving away, all of the things that happen in this life?

Somebody might wonder. And we say, I hope and pray with the help of God. I know God's spirit goes with me everywhere I go.

I know that at the end of this journey, there will not be darkness, but there will be salvation in heaven. I know. I trust.

Maybe you trust a little. Maybe you trust a lot. But let's pray about that. Let's pray. Oh, Lord, we ask that you build our trust in you.

[59 : 22] That maybe we build our trust in each other in this space, and that helps us. To build our trust in a place where we worship. To build our trust in coming to this communion table and building our trust in you.

Sometimes we can't see you. Sometimes we can't feel you. And so we prepare our hearts to come to this table where we can touch, we can feel, and know that you are with us.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. The Lord be with you.

I'm with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and good and a joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we have turned away and when our love has failed, your love remained steadfast.

[60 : 57] You delivered us from the places that look like captivity. You made covenant to be our God and spoke to us through your prophets who looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

When nations shall not lift up sword against nation and neither shall they learn war anymore. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ. Hosanna in the highest.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you, Lord, gave birth to your church, delivered us and deliver us still from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

[62 : 36] At his ascension, you exalted him to sit and reign with you at your right hand. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread.

He gave thanks to you and broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and said, Do this in remembrance of me.

When the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said, Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. And so in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on all of us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine.

[63 : 52] Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen. Let us pray the prayer that the Lord taught us.

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 and ever. Amen. Before we receive, let me just say that this communion table is Jesus' table.

[65 : 06] It's not mine. It doesn't belong to this church. It doesn't belong to the United Methodist Church. It is the Lord's table and there is not one single person who isn't welcome here.

So if you're looking for God, if you want to feel something that physically represents the love that God has for you, I invite you to come.

There will be stations up here where you can take a disposable cup with juice. If you're not comfortable, taking a piece of bread and dipping it into the grape juice.

We have gluten-free bread with its own cup. It'll be over here. And also the gluten-free disposable ones. We have regular bread with gluten. I know regular bread for gluten-free is gluten-free.

But gluten bread over here with the cups as you would need them. You'll be given a piece of bread. You dip it lightly into the cup and then return to your seats.

[66 : 04] Or ask for one of these. Please don't take them on your own because part of what we're doing here by sharing and communion in this space is giving. The gift.

Giving the gift of communion. I'd like to invite the servers to join us at this time. We'll raise a crowd and serve you and then we will begin to serve the congregation.

And you just eat add to another and prepare the congregation. Thank you. We'll take you and just type the restroom.

All right. Thank you.

Thank you.

[67 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[70 : 27] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[72 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[75 : 27] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

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Thank you.

[77 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.