

Luke 19: 28-40

“Service (The Worship Doors)”

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Title Slide

This morning’s message is based upon Luke 19: 28-40, let’s lean in & listen...to God’s word for us this day...

Scripture Slides – Luke 19: 28-40

Let us Pray:

Come, O Holy Spirit, come.

Come as the fire and burn,

Come as the wind and cleanse,

Come as the light and reveal,

Convict us, Convert us, Consecrate us...until we are wholly thine.

And now, Lord, my prayer is simply this:

That the words of my mouth

And the words of all our hearts will be found pleasing and acceptable to you,

for you are our rock and our redeemer...Amen.

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Sermon

A fortnight ago, in his sermon on Worship, Pastor Dave shared a benediction from one of their small group members – it goes, “Worship has ended. The service is just beginning.”

As our homiletics professor used to say, *that’ll preach!*

Service – our serving others as grateful response to God’s great grace – is:

What we do after the worship service.

Service is ***how we live our faith*** – in real time & in the real world – after we’ve spent this *set apart* time in the week to reconnoiter our belief set - & - tune in to God’s call upon our lives.

We get our bearings in worship – by centering around God’s Word – the living Word – Jesus the Christ – that we might then go out into the world to gratefully bear witness to God’s grace revealed in and through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Christ.

To be God’s hands and feet at work in this world – in tangible ways – that is Christ-like service.

[Slide -Music Box]

[LIVESTREAM – hold slide full screen until noted]

It's like an illustration I learned in the college fellowship group I attended – The Music Box. An individual finds & opens a music box – whereupon light, life and vibrant music emerge and bring a fullness of life into this individual's hum-drum existence. The person cannot seem to get enough of this vibrant music.

[LIVESTREAM – end slide full screen but can stay in picture in picture]

In the workplace break room, they open the music box – *just a bit* and allow the good music to wash over them.

A co-worker enters they close the box – grab their lunch bag and go to eat at the picnic tables behind the loading dock.

One day someone is sitting nearby – hears the music box when opened – and is also swept up in the melody – they come over to listen to the good music with this individual – it is like nothing they have ever heard.

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Together, these two enjoy the sound, then it dawns on the individual – the music was never meant to be kept to oneself – it is meant to be shared – with all – and so they share it with their family, their friends, and the vibrancy of life that has come into their lives is witnessed by others around them and the music moves outward.

Soon all who encounter this vibrant music are living transformed lives and begin looking for ways to share this music with others.

They begin to live their lives by the rhythm of the music and they begin finding themselves going where this music seems to direct them.

The good music prompts them to share life together by working alongside the people around them.

By now, you've probably guessed the import of this parable:

The music is God's Word – the living, breathing word of God (Scripture) – the Word made Flesh (Jesus the Christ) – the word at work in this world (Church/the Body of Christ in service) – the music changes us...to Word changes us!

[Slide – Campfire]

[LIVESTREAM – hold slide full screen until noted]

To adapt the great campfire song:
That's how it is with God's *Word* /
Once you've experienced it /
You want to sing /
It's fresh like Spring /
You want to *Pass it On*

[LIVESTREAM – end slide full screen but can stay in picture in picture]

WE *Pass it On* – by how we live it out in the surrounding communities – during those hours between weekly worship.

This worship hour is important – it reminds us who & whose we are / who we are with & where we might go on this journey.

We gather in worship – that we would grow as God’s faithful disciples.

We get up from worship – that we would go into the world to live & serve as God’s faithful disciples.

To build upon that benediction Pastor Dave shared with us, when “worship has ended, the service is just beginning.”

We might think of it this way, “The Worship Doors are open twice...once to let us in & second to let us go out.”

[Title Slide]

This Lent, we have been looking at Spiritual Disciplines.

We’ve spent time with: Prayer / Study / Fellowship / Worship / Witness...in so doing we’ve become re-acquainted with them, because they are what help shape us into who it is God needs us to be & where it is God calls us to be – as members of Christ’s body.

Whether it is in cyberspace or in person, when we gather for worship or engage in spiritual disciplines, we do so in order to soak in God’s presence – to praise and give thanks to God whose great grace offers new, full life *to all* – then we go from this set-apart time with gratitude to share that great grace with the world around us.

We learn what we believe in worship...and through spiritual disciplines.

We enact our beliefs out there – beyond the church’s doors.

In a very real sense, worship & spiritual disciplines are the ways we open faith’s music box **that** we would hear faith’s vibrant & vital resonance in our lives.

[Slide – Vital Signs]

[LIVESTREAM – hold slide full screen until noted]

In the human body we have vital sign indicators.

According to The Cleveland Clinic, “Vital signs measure the body's basic functions. These measurements are taken to help assess the general physical health of a person, give clues to possible diseases and show progress toward recovery.”¹

Vital signs show how well your body is working.

[LIVESTREAM – end slide full screen but can stay in picture in picture]

The four often noted in our medical charts are: body temperature, blood pressure, pulse and breathing rates.

¹ <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/10881-vital-signs>

According to The American Journal of Critical Care, “While all vital signs are important indicators of patient status, the combination of changes in respiratory rate and heart rate have been deemed the most crucial predictors. ... [C]ontinuous monitoring of heart rate and respiratory rate can help health teams predict and reduce the occurrence of potentially adverse events, such as cardiac arrest, and respiratory failure, even up 6 to 8 hours before the event.”²

Heart & breath – are indicators of vitality.

[Slide – GPC Front]

The church is – The Body of Christ...
To what rhythm does our heart beat?
In what ways do we breathe in & breathe out God’s grace?

These are indicative of congregational vitality.

[Slide – Triumphal Entry 3 Images]

[LIVESTREAM – hold slide full screen until blank slide]

According to Luke’s text, during Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the crowds erupted with joyful praise...

“...the whole multitude of the disciples praised God joyfully with loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

‘Blessed is the king

Who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven,

And glory in the highest heaven!’

It is a celebration – and yet – it is so much more – considering how Luke precedes this story.

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There is a parable of the Greedy and Vengeful King (Luke 19:11-27) - & - just before that it is the Zacchaeus story – Jesus visits with a tax collector (a profession looked down upon by most for it was often practiced by greedy, nefarious men) – Jesus declares during this encounter “...salvation has come to [Zaccheus’ house that day]...” (Luke 19:1-10)

In the case of the Greedy and Vengeful King, Jesus tells of a nobleman who goes away to get royal power for himself. He gives ten servants each one pound, saying to them, “Do business with these until I come back.”

² <https://blog.earlysense.com/5-important-patient-vital-signs-to-ensure-patient-safety>

As the nobleman leaves, a delegation of citizens voice their displeasure, saying, "We do not want this man to rule over us."

The nobleman receives royal power & returns.

He summons the servants to whom he had given the money to find out what they had gained by trading.

The first reports, "Your pound has made ten more."

The second reports, "Your pound made five pounds."

The third steps forward, "Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it in a piece of cloth. I was afraid because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow."

To the first two, the nobleman bestows accolades and puts them in charge of cities.

To the third, the nobleman berates with words like, "you wicked slave! You knew [what kind of shrewd businessman I am.] Why didn't you put the money in the bank? When I returned [at least] I could have collected it with interest."

The parable ends with the nobleman's words, "take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds. ... I tell you, to all who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them – bring them here and slaughter them in my presence."

End scene.

[Slide – Triumphal Entry 1 Image]

[LIVESTREAM – hold slide full screen until blank slide]

Then, according to Luke, Jesus rides into Jerusalem – and this Jesus (the king who comes in the name of the Lord) will usher in a kingdom the likes of which have yet to be seen:

...this Jesus will call into being a world order that is turned upside down & inside out

...this Jesus re-defines how far God's grace reaches

...this kingdom will not operate by the business model's "Golden Rule" which states, "The one with the most gold makes the rules"

...rather this kingdom will operate by the servant leader's "Golden Rule," "*Do unto others as you would have done unto you*"

...this Jesus sends disciples into a variety of locales to share the vibrant, vital music of God's grace in both word & deed as ways of declaring "salvation (new life) has taken up residence in this place today."

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To what rhythm does the church's heart beat?

In what ways does Christ's church breathe in & breathe out God's grace?

Here is how one church has come to answer these questions...**[show video]**

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Hope Church chose to think “outside the steeple” and created vibrant, vital ways to share God’s grace by living and serving in the communities in which they found themselves residing.

[Side – GPC Front Doors & Several Ministry Images]

[LIVESTREAM – slide picture in picture until noted below]

To what rhythm does our heart beat?

How do we breath in God’s grace - & - Where are we called to breath out God’s grace?

How will we live & serve the vibrant, vital good news of God’s grace in this community and world?

[LIVESTREAM – hold slide full screen until blank slide]

Some of the ways GPC thinks “outside the steeple”:

- Masks for Neighbors on High Street
- Breakfast bag deliveries for Gettysburg CARES
- Monday-Thursday after-school program
- Middle & High School youth who end a five-hour ecumenical zoom lock writing gratitude letters to first responders & health care workers. The following prose was written at 1 AM,

“Dear First Responders,

Thank you for all you’ve done these last few years. Between the opium epidemic, the surge in heart related diseases, and now COVID-19, you have done a lot to better and even save the lives of your patients. Without people like you, the quality of all our lives would be much worse.”

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Some might wonder why...why do any of it?

The best answer I’ve got, is, *Once you’ve heard the music – you can’t keep it to yourself – for somewhere deep inside we know, “[that] even if these were silent, the stones would shout out...”*

Amen.