**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, June 2, 2019, 7th Sunday of Easter**

**Call to Worship (please see bulletin)**

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord, we thank you for this beautiful Sunday morning, and for the rains we’ve received.

We thank you for your son Jesus Christ…

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 97:1-12 (please see bulletin)**

**Special Music “It Is Well With My Soul” Emily Priddy, vocals and piano**

**Time Out For Teaching: Jesus the Priest**

This morning we get a glimpse into a portion of Jesus’ prayer to His Father. It is a lengthy prayer, found in John’s gospel in chapter 17. I invite you to look at it with me together in your pew Bibles.

So, what do you think is happening in this prayer? Presumably, Jesus was talking to His Father inn private, and oh to be a fly on the wall listening in on this conversation Jesus is having with God.

So, it might feel a little bit like you’re eavesdropping on Jesus, having this personal heart-to-heart with God. But it also tells us a lot. It tells us that Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, has a very intimate relationship to the rest of the Trinity. And Jesus, God in human form, is showing us that even He prays to God.

Jesus is connected to God in a way that is hard for us to do on our own however. The traditional theologians often say that Jesus is Prophet, Priest and King. This reading in John exemplifies Jesus as Priest.

Jesus is a priest because he stepped in line as the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for the sins of humanity. As Scriptures say elsewhere, Jesus is the last “priest” we need, to end all needs for sacrifices in the Temple.

A priest is someone who brings us into close relationship to God when we have been experiencing estrangement from God. And it begins with prayer. It continues when we continue to practice relying on God. Jesus has been described in a similar as our “bridge” to God. For as Jesus has said elsewhere in John that if we know Jesus, then we also know His Father.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**John 17:20-26**

20"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

**Acts 16:16-34**

16One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." 18She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

19But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. 20When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews 21and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." 22The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. 23After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. 24Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. 28But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 34He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

**Sermon: Resident Aliens**

Paul and Silas, apostles of the Lord, have just experienced miraculous things. They saw a young servant woman who was being used to make money for her owners. She had some sort of “second sight,” which made it possible for her to recognize them as servants of the Lord. Funny enough, Paul is “annoyed,” even though we are not told exactly what was so annoying. You might assume that it was only because she would stop talking, and was following them around. That would be enough to annoy me. Or perhaps it seemed unfair to him that her owners were exploiting her gift of sight for money. However, since Paul believed in only one God, in Jesus Christ, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, he was probably annoyed that this other “spirit” in the girl was talking for him. She was possessed and Paul knew she needed to be healed, so he rebuked it. In so doing, he also put a stop to the profits that she was making for her owner. They dragged Paul and Silas to jail, complaining, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans...." (try to tell that to the Roman prison guard who was so moved by the angels in prison that he and his whole household became converts.)

So, they were mad that Paul disrupted their income flow. This is not one of those times when Paul does as the Romans do. He was a Roman, but he was not of the same pagan beliefs that they had. But Paul did it for his reasons, compassion, faith and ethics.

We all have to act on our beliefs. It is why we vote the certain ways we do, why we make different choices. And even though we all have a variety of ways of seeing things, we have a common faith in Jesus Christ. We might as well, bound by our faith in him, feel sometimes like we are strangers in our own town, or feel as church people, a small colony of believers surrounded by a world that doesn’t always seem friendly towards, or at the least is estranged from the Christian lifestyle. It may be a little alienating when we see and hear things happening around us and our beliefs are offended. We are a special kind of colony when we choose church over other habits, when we take consideration about what God wants before we make a choice. And that’s not a bad thing. It just might be uncomfortable for us sometimes. It just shows that believers are “set apart” for God’s purposes, and not just left to our own devices. We, in our faith, are consecrated and this at times leads us to pickle like Paul and Silas – doing what they believed what was right. It’s a lot like being aliens in our own world.

What strength of mind and faith it takes to stick to what we believe and act on it, and to realize that sometimes we come across things we cannot change about this broken and fearful world. Authors Hauerwas and Willimon offer us some words of comfort when we face that dilemma, in their groundbreaking book, “Resident Aliens,” telling us that we can feel like aliens, that even though Christianity has a strong history political and social activism, that great change has happened because of the lived faith of believers, at other times, we are unable to change the world. We are a small band of believers, a colony of like-minded people trying to exist in a world not so welcoming to us when we fail to “fit in.” It echoes very strongly Paul himself wrote in his letter to the Romans when he tells those Roman Christians, “Be in the world but not of this world,” and be not conformed to this world but transformed by our knowledge of Christ. Hauerwas and Willimon charge us, “We would like a church that again asserts that God, not nations, rules the world, that the boundaries of God's kingdom transcend those of Caesar, and that the main political task of the church is the formation of people who see clearly the cost of discipleship…”

The cost of discipleship is steep. But it is worth it, even if we don’t always see the ripple effect of our choices as Christians. But we have integrity, when we live by faith. As I said, we who believe in God’s gracious promises, lead by our understanding of Jesus Christ and his Kingdom, we might not always be able to change the broken world around us, but we do look to the one who made it and rules it.

I would like to remind you of a most famous prayer. People in AA say it all the time. It’s woven into a blanket draped on my couch and it reminds us: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.” I believe that even though that prayer is from more recent in history, the Apostles were living by that prayer each day they had to interact with the world, bringing that Good News, but also, equally importantly, their behavior. Let us remember our place in God’s kingdom, and joyfully embrace our mission to exist faithfully in God’s realm. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Invitation**

Friends, this is the feast of God for the People of God. All who seek Him here are invited to share in this holy meal. We eat at this table at the invitation of our host, Jesus Christ. It is the intersection between heaven and earth. Therefore, it is not a Presbyterian Table. It is the table of Jesus Christ. May you find here a taste of heaven and a reminder of God’s holy strength that goes with you where you are.

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you…

With our whole heart and our very being  
we praise you for you are a wise and wonderful God.  
With nothing more than a word,  
you created the whirling planets  
and breathed life into all of creation.  
You made us in your image,  
that we might be stewards of this good earth.

Together, with all of creation, we sing your majesty:  
**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.**

You blessed us with the promise of abundance and grace  
if only we lived within the bounds of your mercy.  
But we pushed those boundaries and neglected your earth,  
mistreating one another and failing to care for creation.  
So you sent your Son, Jesus Christ,  
to redeem us for we were unable to redeem ourselves.  
In the flesh he came among us and preached the Gospel  
not only in word but in deed.

We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus,  
on the night before he died, took bread,  
and after giving thanks to you, he broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat. This is my body, broken for you.

In the same way Jesus took the cup, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

We gather this day, God of all majesty and power,  
to lift up your holy name and proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Giver of Every Mercy,  
send us the presence of your Spirit  
that she might bless us in this holy meal,  
sending us forth into the world  
to be both hearers and doers of your Word.  
Unite us this day with our sisters and brothers around the world  
as we preach the Gospel and grow in our understanding of discipleship.

We lift high today for your care,

the family and friends of Connie Harris, Delmer Bell

We remember travelers

People hit with the many storms, tornadoes and flooding

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,  
all glory and honor are yours, Holy God,  
both now and forever more. **Amen**.

**Distribution of the Elements**

**Prayer after Communion**

**Announcements**