

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 134:1-2

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord!

A HYMN OF PRAISE

Hymn 286 – Worship Christ, the Risen King

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

THE CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH

Westminster Shorter Catechism 1 & 2 Q&A

Minister: What is the chief end of man?

Congregation: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Minister: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

Congregation: The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

ASCRPTION OF PRAISE

Hymn 4 – Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (Stanzas 3 & 4)

RESPONSIVE READING

The Law of God

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Holy Father in heaven, we confess before you how little we live for your pleasure. We don't mourn over our own sin, or grieve over the profound grip that the world has over us. We don't feel the brokenness of this present world deeply enough to pray, with intense passion, for you to intervene in it, for your glory. We have forgotten the feast that will be laid before us in heaven, and have tried to fill our inner hunger with the things of this world. We perform to polish our own self-image or gain praise from others, but do not really seek you. Show us today the deceptiveness of our own hearts. Enable us to recognize increasingly how self-serving we really are. Teach us to truly repent not only for our sin, but even for the religious acts we use to try to impress others, and gain your favor. Help us to turn our backs on our attempts at righteousness, and instead, become people, who cling, with ever greater passion, to the perfect righteousness of Christ in our place, Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. *Matthew 11:29-30*

RESPONSE OF THE CONGREGATION

Hymn 518 – Christ, of All My Hopes the Ground (Stanzas 3 & 4)

SCRIPTURE READING

1 John 3:11-24 Pew Bible Pg. 1303

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

Followed by the Lord's Prayer ("Debts")

OFFERING and DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Old Hundredth L.M. (731)

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Philemon 8-9

Pew Bible Pg. 1273

Paul's Loving Approach to Philemon

Pastor James A. La Belle

A HYMN OF RESPONSE

Hymn 585 – Take My Life and Let It Be

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(The inner circles of cups contain wine and the outer circle contains grape juice. Please hold each element until all have been served so that we may partake together.)

DEACON'S OFFERING

A HYMN OF RESPONSE

Hymn 517 – I've Found a Friend, O Such a Friend!

BENEDICTION

Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone does wondrous works in glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity; the whole earth let his glory fill. Amen, so let it be. *McKee CM (11:1,2)*

Philemon 8-9—Paul's loving approach

He might have commanded

- I. Paul was an apostle invested with the authority of Christ, Acts 9.15; Gal 1.1; Eph 1.1
 - A. He could speak on Christ's behalf, declare the will of God to the churches, and command righteousness in the name of Christ, 1Cor 5.3-5; 7.10-12; 14.37; Lk 10.16
 - B. But his apostleship is not something Paul insists upon in this letter, cf. v.1. His mention of it here is only to make clear that while he knows he has the right "in Christ" to command, he refused to exercise it.
 - C. There are two reasons, then, why Paul might have commanded Philemon, v.8
 1. Because he had the lawful authority to
 2. Because what he's requesting is a thing "required;" i.e. it's a matter of righteousness before God, cf. Lk 17.4; Mt 6.15
 - D. Yet, where Paul might have commanded, he didn't. Why? For the sake of love, v.9 (cf. vv.4-7)
- II. **Lesson:** we don't always have to stand upon our authority.
 - A. Many people, especially men, love to stand upon their authority; not so much because they should, but because they can—and primarily because they're afraid of losing it.
 1. The result is a government in which they rule the bodies but not the hearts. Theirs is an authority that's obeyed and yet despised and hated.
 2. They never learn just how powerful gentleness and love are in the hands of a ruler because they hide behind their authority in fear.
 - B. Paul appealed to Philemon because he sought not so much to move Philemon as to see Philemon move himself.
 1. Paul knew that nothing was so strong as love and nothing so persuasive as a loving government.
 - C. This is a great lesson for all stations. We should all set our conduct by this pattern and let the law of love ever sit upon our lips. Harsh authority is the weapon of a weak man whereas love is the weapon of a strong man.
 1. If all you want is outward conformity, then imposing your will might work; but if you're after oneness of will and the joyful inclination of the heart, that can only be gained by a loving authority.

He preferred to appeal

- I. Paul lays out two motives in support of his appeal
 - A. He asks Philemon to consider that this request is coming from an old man.
 - 1. This reminds us that honor and deference should be given to our aged saints. They've seen more battles than we have and learned more of the strength of the flesh and the power of the Spirit to overcome it than we have. And they've learned things the hard way and can teach us a better way—if we'll listen.
 - 2. Paul's appeal reminds us that in the church of God, the elderly should be appreciated and respected by the youth and not marginalized to make way for the youth.]
 - B. He asks Philemon to consider that this request is coming from a prisoner for Christ Jesus. By these two motives Paul seeks to kindly reinforce the duty which is binding upon Philemon before God.
 - C. This is a model of loving leadership patterned after the Lord's loving approach to us, Mt 11.29-30
 - 1. Understand how lovingly the Lord approaches us with His Law. Outside of Christ the Law is cold and hard; but in and from Christ it comes to us covered with His blood and sealed with His love as He says to us, "Will you do all these things for My sake?"
 - 2. And we cannot resist Him, because we love Him, 1Jn 4.19; Jn 14.15
 - D. **Lesson:** it's from this gentle and loving manner in which Christ has treated us that we learn how to treat one another.
 - 1. Some may need rough imperatives backed by force, but loving gentleness should always be tried first.
 - 2. We're to rule in so loving a manner that submission to us will be the easiest thing in the world; and that means we must learn when to yield our authority and how to show our strength by stooping in love to those under us.

We extend a **cordial welcome** to the visitors in our service today.

Please sign our guest register in the narthex.

Christian Education classes are available each Sunday at 8:50 am. All are welcome.

Adult Sunday School Class – Join us for a study, *Old Testament Survey: The Wisdom Books*, led by Pastor La Belle.

Sunday Afternoon Study – 4:30pm, Pastor La Belle will be leading the study entitled *Heartwork*. Join us for Lesson 8, “Governing the Heart, Part 3”.

Women’s Fellowship – Tuesday, 6:30pm All ladies are invited to join us for a sweet time of fellowship and study. We will be discussing the material from Chapter 11 of Elyse Fitzpatrick’s *Because He Loves Me*. We hope to see you there!

Prayer Meeting – Come pray with us Wednesday at 6:30pm. The prayer meeting will begin with a brief study led by an Elder followed by a time of intercessory prayer.

Trustees Meeting – Thursday, 6pm

Upcoming Men’s Retreat – Please prayerfully consider registering for this year’s men’s retreat at Camp Shiloh in Jefferson N.H. This promises to be a blessed time for us as we will be instructed in God’s word unto our sanctification along with enjoying Christian fellowship among the Brethren. Please make every effort to attend!

The **Annual Meetings of the Congregation and the Corporation** will be held on *January 27th at 9:30 AM*. In preparation for these meetings, the annual reports should be emailed to Tara Furman at pcccsecretary@gmail.com no later than January 13th from the following persons/committees: *Pastor, Session, Clerk, Diaconate, Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Women’s Fellowship, & Trustees*. Thank you. Also, please check the Bulletin Board for upcoming nominations.

The missionaries for this month – Sam and Eun-soo Folta returning to China.

Birthdays & Anniversaries this week:

Barry Johnson

John Chapman

Bulletin announcements should be submitted to Tara Furman by 12 noon on Wednesdays. Please e-mail to pcccsecretary@gmail.com or call 774-208-8544.