

# CORNERSTONE

# Presbyterian Church



SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND GOSPEL RENEWAL

The Sundays of Pentecost: Ordinary Time 22 October 2023

# Pastoral Notes

Dear Cornerstone Family,

Two weeks ago, I mentioned my intention to write several brief articles on the complexities and mysteries behind Malachi I:2-3, "Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated." I want to pick up that thread with you today by zeroing in on the biblical doctrine of the love of God. I italicized the words "biblical doctrine" because the love of God is often thought of in one dimensional or sentimentalized ways in our time.

When we hear, "God is love," it is often assumed we mean that God is an old softy, a grandfather in the sky. He keeps candy in his pocket in case he passes children on the sidewalk and just loves and accepts everyone and everything no matter what. The problem with this notion is it doesn't faithfully represent—you guessed it—the *biblical doctrine* of the love of God.

In the year 2000, the long-time professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.A. Carson, was writing a book on the love of God. After giving himself to the subject for several months, he landed on this title for his book: *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God.* Carson is onto something with that title. When we take the Bible's teaching on the love of God seriously, we're immediately confronted with a multifaceted and complex doctrine.

In Carson's work, he identifies five ways the Bible speaks of God's love. Today, I want to look at two of them with you.

First, there is the love that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have shared for one another from all eternity. Before anything was made, God enjoyed within himself perfect love and communion (John 3:35, 5:20, 14:31). It is this love that is the source from which every other dimension of the love of God flows. The rich love and communion of the Godhead overflows into the work of creation and providence.

Second, there is God's providential love for everything he made. In and from the love that God enjoys within himself, he created the heavens and the earth. He declared what he made was "good" (Genesis I:I0, I2, I8, 2I, 25, 3I). Why is creation good? Because it is the fruit of a loving Triune Creator. This is why God cares for every part of creation, even the parts that seem insignificant like lilies of the field and birds of the air (Matthew 6:26-29). When we speak of God's care, we are speaking of his *providence*. You see the word *provide* in the word *provide*nce for a reason!

Question 27 of the Heidelberg Catechism beautifully expresses God's providential love in this way: "The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were, by his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand."

I'll pick up this thread again either next week or sometime in early November and consider with you the other three ways the Bible speaks of God's love. Stay tuned!

Your servant.

2

Worship is a response to the love of God that brings us out of darkness into his light. The rhythm and flow of the service reflects this present reality as God calls his people and reveals himself, forgives their sins, teaches them from his Word, the Bible, feeds them, and then sends them out to live what they have learned.

This is the pattern of his love in redeeming and saving his people.

# Prelude, Announcements, and Preparation

#### GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE AND REVEALS HIMSELF

God calls His people to worship and come before Him. The Creator of all things reveals Himself through His Word and calls us into His presence.

# Introit—Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise, Vs I & 2



Text: Walter Chalmers Smith, 1867; Music: ST. DENIO, Traditional Welsh Melody.

#### Call to Worship—Psalm 146:1-2, 5-7, 9-10

Pastor: Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! We will praise the Lord as long as we live;

All: We will sing praises to our God while we have being.

Pastor: Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God,

All: He made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;

Pastor: He executes justice for the oppressed, He gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;

All: The LORD watches over the sojourners;

he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations.

All: Praise the Lord!

#### Hymn of Praise—Psalm 146: Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah



Text: Psalm 146, The Psalter, 1912; Music: RIPLEY, Gregorian Chant, Arr. By Lowell Mason, 1839.

## New Testament Reading—Romans 3:21-26

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Elder: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

# GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO CONFESSION, REPENTANCE & RECONCILIATION

The People of God respond to His Word by confessing their sins, repenting of their sinful ways, and seeking God's favor through the reconciling work of Jesus, the Son of God.

# Sung Response—Holy Father, Hear My Cry, vs I & 2



Text: Horatius Bonar, 1843; Music: Gregory Wilbur, 2010. Used by permission.

## Congregational Confession of Sin—Malachi 3:6-7

Leader: "For I the LORD do not change;

All: therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Leader: From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes

All: and have not kept them.

Leader: Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.

And so we pray together:

Heavenly Father, save us completely from sin.

We know we are righteous through the righteousness of another,

but we long to reflect your likeness;

We are your children and should bear your image,

Grant us to walk as Christ walked, to live in the newness of his life:

the life of love, the life of faith, the life of holiness.

Forgive us and have mercy on our unbelief,

on our corrupt and wandering hearts.

When your blessings come we begin to idolize them,

and set our affections on the creation rather than the creator.

Cleanse our spiritual adultery and give us purity.

Sin is our greatest curse;

let your victory over it be apparent to our consciousness, and displayed in our lives.

Fill us with grace daily,

that our lives may be overflowing fountains of sweet water for your glory and for the fame of the Gospel, Amen.

# Silent Prayers of Confession

#### Assurance of Pardon—Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

+++New Arrivals are Welcome to be Seated+++

Hymn of Petition—Lord Jesus, Think on Me



Text: Synesius of Cyrene, c. 375-430, Tr Allen William Charfield, 1808-96; Music: SOUTHWELL, Damon's *Psalmes*, 1579. Adapted © 1997 Greyfriars Press.

# The Reading of the Word—Malachi 2:17-3:6

<sup>17</sup> You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

3 "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the LORD whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. <sup>3</sup>He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

<sup>5</sup> "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>6</sup> "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Leader: The grass withers, the flower fades;

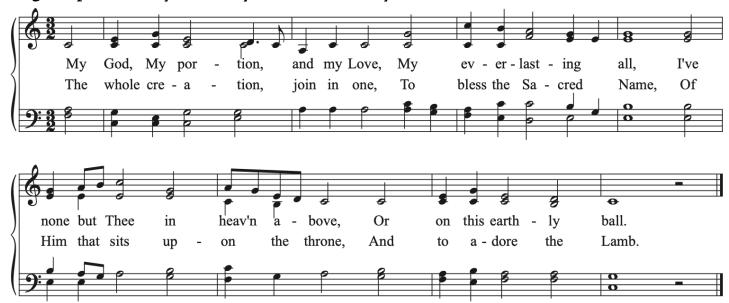
All: But the Word of our God will stand forever.

Sermon—Malachi: God's Unchanging Love, part 4

Where is the God of Justice

—Nate Shurden, Pastor

# Sung Response—My God, My Portion, and My Love vs I & 5



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748; Music: DUNLAP'S CREEK, from Southern Harmony.

## Profession of Faith—The Apostles' Creed

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,

born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into Heaven

and now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,

from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\* church,

The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Catholic" refers to the universal church of God's people throughout all time and from all places



CCLI #11121087 Text: Is 6:3, Rev 4:8, Mt 21:9; Music: FRANKLIN SANCTUS, Gregory D Wilbur, 2009.

#### THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

God offers to His people the gift of communion with Him through the grace of the sacrament and we respond in thanksgiving.

## Words of Institution and the Lord's Table

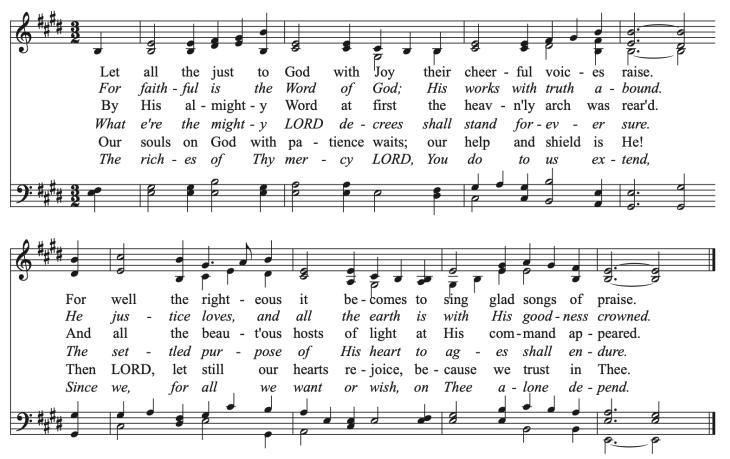
# Guidelines for the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the family meal for Christians. We invite all baptized Christians who are members of a congregation that proclaims the gospel, and who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ to join us.

If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer. You can find some sample prayers on the next page. We hope that this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with His people, the church.

At Cornerstone, we come forward to receive communion. Proceed to the first table for the bread, and then to the second for wine/juice.

## Psalm of the Month—Psalm 33: Let All the Just



Words: Psalm 33, Tate and Brady's New Versions 1696, alt. 2022 Music: LAND OF REST, American Folk Melody

#### Prayers for Those Not Taking the Lord's Supper

If you are not able to partake in the Lord's Supper today, please use this time to meditate on one of the following prayers.

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth. Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen

Prayer of Belief. Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen

Prayer of Commitment. Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship through membership in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen

# Hymn of Communion—Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88 and John Cennick, 1718-55; Music: HELMSLEY, 18th century English Melody.

# Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, As we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

## Hymn of Praise—How Firm a Foundation



Text: Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787; Music: FOUNDATION, Traditional American Melody

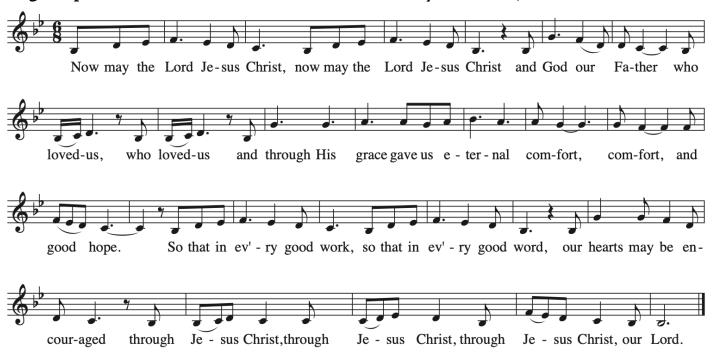
#### GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE OUT TO BE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

After calling His people into His presence, forgiving their sins, instructing them in His Word, and providing a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb, God sends His people into the world to show His light in the darkness.

#### Benediction—I Thessalonians 5:23-24

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. *Amen.* 

## Sung Response—II Thessalonians 2:16-17 Now May the Lord Jesus Christ



©2023 Text and Music: Karin Simmons & Gregory Wilbur, 2023

Welcome to Cornerstone! If you are visiting with us today, we are glad you're here and would love the opportunity to welcome you personally. We invite you to fill out the visitor card available in the pew in front of you.

Please drop it in the offering boxes at either chapel entrance as you leave.

# Focus on Church Ministry

#### Film Night Tomorrow

On Monday, October 23, at 6:30 p.m., come watch and discuss Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt*—a classic exploration of the tendency towards good and evil in the heart of every person. Hitchcock considered this one of his favorite films. We will talk about the content and the art of the film. Contact: greg@cstonepres.org

#### Men's Fall Classic

Brothers, please join us on November 4 from 3:00-7:30 p.m. for the Cornerstone Fall Classic—Cornhole Tournament, Chili Cook-off, and Fire-pit Fellowship at Preston Brooks' home (1020 Lumsden Ln, Franklin). If you don't have a cornhole teammate but would like to participate, simply register and you'll be paired with a teammate. If you'd like to be a judge for the Chili Cookoff, or have any other questions, please contact Mark Mitchell at markdanielmitchell@gmail.com. Register now on the homepage of the website.

#### Midweek at Cornerstone

There's something for everyone at Midweek! Join us on Wednesdays for dinner and stay for Kids Club, Youth Group, Vespers, and Choir. Dinner registration opens each Thursday morning and remains open until Monday at noon. Make sure you're subscribed to our emails so you don't miss any details!

#### Cornerstone Devotional

The devotional for our new sermon series on Malachi is available at either entrance to the Chapel. Take one home and read along with your Cornerstone family.

#### Youth Bonfire & Games

The youth ministry is hosting a fellowship event on Saturday, October 28: Bonfire and Barbarian Wars. We'll gather at the Brooks' home for a fun (and messy) game starting at 3:00 p.m., share supper together at 5:30, and fellowship over a bonfire as it gets dark. We will finish at 8:00. Come join us for a memorable afternoon and evening!

#### Rekindled

We are excited to invite Cornerstone women, ages 55ish and up and single, to a brunch and fellowship with other ladies in our body who are in a similar season of life. We will gather on November II at 10:00 a.m. at The Corner House. Please let Martha know you are coming! martha@cstonepres.org

#### Arts Discussion: Babette's Feast by Isak Dinesen

As we prepare for holiday food and feasts, this short work (about 50 pages) reminds us of the role of food in Scripture and the redemptive power of sharing a table, and ourselves, with others. Come discuss with us on Monday, November 13, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: greg@cstonepres.org

#### Youth Service Day

On Saturday, November 18, Cornerstone Youth students are invited to come and serve with GraceWorks Ministries. We will be working with the food pantry to make meal bags for students in need in Williamson County from 8:00-10:00 a.m. Mark your calendars—we hope to see you there!

#### Adult Sunday School Classes

A History of Grace: The American Presbyterian Story This year marks the 50th anniversary of our denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). In light of this momentous occasion, we have developed a five-week course to explore key spiritual lessons for the life of the church by overviewing the development of American Presbyterianism. The final two weeks of the class will pay special emphasis to the origin, development, and current state of the PCA. Please join us in the Chapel!

Thus Saith the Lord: Why We're People of The Book
In this five-week class on the Third Floor, you will
consider the nature and development of the Bible. Topics
like biblical clarity and sufficiency, as well as questions
about inspiration, inerrancy, and the development of the
canon will all be addressed. If you or anyone you know has
questions about the Bible, or if you simply want to better
understand the nature of the Bible, this is the class for you!

# Taking the Message Home

Today's message, "Where is the God of Justice?" is taken from Malachi 2:17-3:6. Please take time to discuss the questions below with your family, friends, or Home Fellowship Group (HFG):

- Are you able to explain the tension between the desire for the justice of God and the inability to handle the justice of God?
- Why does God not bring justice immediately after we sin but instead waits to bring justice?
- With this text and Christ's work in view, how does the consuming fire of judgment relate to the purifying fire of God's grace?
- Why is it really good news that God does not change?
- What from today's service ministered to you specifically?

# CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

#### Presbyterian Church in America

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Women's Ministry Director: Martha Brooks (615-591-1683) or women@cstonepres.org

Men's Ministry: men@cstonepres.org

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Director of Youth and Families: Drew Abercrombie (407-489-1724) or drew@cstonepres.org
Children's Director: Meredith Suits (865-250-3579) or elementary@cstonepres.org

Nursery Coordinator: Christy Shurden or nursery@cstonepres.org

Administrative Assistant for Discipleship: Kelley Shell (662-231-9814) or kelley@cstonepres.org

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Prayer Requests: prayer@cstonepres.org

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All Scripture quotations from the English Standard Version

