

“TAKE 10”- Worship While Away! (Sunday, September 17, 2017)

Share: People of God, bless the Lord, bless God’s holy name.
For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God’s steadfast love for us.

Read these words from a hymn today: *There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy*
There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea. There’s a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty. There is no place where earth’s sorrows are more felt than up in heaven. There is no place where earth’s failings have such kindly judgment given. For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind. And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind. If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God’s Word, and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of the Lord.

Read this scripture from worship: Romans 14:1-12 (The Message)

14 Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don’t see things the way you do. And don’t jump all over them every time they do or say something you don’t agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.²⁻⁴ For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ’s table, wouldn’t it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn’t eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God’s welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

⁵ Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.⁶⁻⁹ What’s important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for *God’s* sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you’re a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It’s *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That’s why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.¹⁰⁻¹² So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I’d say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we’re all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren’t going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture: “As I live and breathe,” God says, “every knee will bow before me; every tongue will tell the honest truth that I and only I am God.” So tend to your knitting. You’ve got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

Talk together, responding to these questions:

- How do we honor the Lord through our relationships with others?
- Forgiveness is a hard thing. When has someone forgiven you?
Is there someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness?
- Why is my forgiveness of others so connected to God's forgiveness?
- How do we preserve and promote the well-being of our church?

Pray together: O God of this and every morning, your forgiveness transcends whatever wrong exists between us. Grant us the courage to forgive others, and to practice reconciliation by the kindness of our speaking, the sharing of our resources, and honoring of your desire for good. Through Christ our Savior. Amen.

Bless one another: Make the sign of the CROSS on each other's forehead, saying, "God bless you, and may you bless God today."