

# Re-Write Your Story

## Traditional Worship • October 7

### Our Pastors:

- Lead Pastor Andy Payton [leadpastor@methodisttemple.church](mailto:leadpastor@methodisttemple.church)
- Associate Pastor JillAnn Knonenborg [associatepastor@methodisttemple.church](mailto:associatepastor@methodisttemple.church)

### Sunday Morning Volunteers:

- Ushers (7): Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jacque Hardin, Nelson & Joyse Rivers
- Ushers (14): Eric Eades, captain; Seby Durgy, Chuck Taylor, Ronnie Pursley, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)
- Greeters (14): Marty Van Stone, Wanda Erwin, Carla Bolin
- Greeters (21): Warren & Rosemary Heinsohn, Mary Lockett

\*Ushers & Greeters remain in the Narthex during worship. Please reach out to them with any questions or special needs you may have. They are happy to assist!

### Additional Information:

- Prayer Concerns: John Keller, Jane Robey, Nancy Hitch; the family of Paul Murphy in his passing; the family of Carol Primm in her passing.
- Today's Sanctuary flowers given by Nick & Andrea Wallace to the glory of God in honor of the birthdays of Emmalyn & Clara.
- Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Don Travis. Organist: Barbara Waite.

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

#### PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

#### WELCOME

#### PRELUDE

"Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading" by Tanzania/M. Bedford"

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: From the ends of the earth, God has gathered us around the Table.

People: **We come to feast together.**

Leader: Have mercy on Your Church, Lord, in its division and its failures.

People: **Unite us with love this day.**

#### CHORAL INTROIT

"All That Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord" by René Clausen

#### \*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

#### \*FIRST HYMN

"Let Us Talents And Tongues Employ"

#### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

#### CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us listen for God in the silence.

#### PASTORAL PRAYER

All: Lord of Creation, on this World Communion Sunday, give us eyes to see Your reflection in our brothers and sisters everywhere. Give us minds brave enough to celebrate differences. Give us hearts big enough to love all people. We thank You that Your Table is open to all. And now, O God, hear us as we pray, each in our own hearts and our own ways...

#### GIVING OFFERING

"Bunessan" by A. Bullard

#### \*DOXOLOGY *the congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.*

#94 in Hymnal

#### ANTHEM

"Will You Come And Follow Me" by Scotland/D. Maxwell

#### KIDZ MOMENT

#### SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 8:14-21

<sup>14</sup> The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." <sup>16</sup> They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." <sup>17</sup> Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" <sup>18</sup> Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? <sup>19</sup> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied. <sup>20</sup> "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." <sup>21</sup> He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

#### SCRIPTURE RESPONSE TFWS #2203

"ALABARÉ (O COME AND SING)"

#### MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

Division/ Kingdom

Well good morning friends. I've got some good news. I've got some bad news. The bad news is I've lost my voice. The good news is I'll be efficient with my words today. I think that's maybe good news I don't know. I don't know. Today we are continuing our sermon series on rewriting your story. The emphasis quite simply is the stories we tell ourselves influence how we live our lives. They influence how we think about ourselves. The stories we tell ourselves influence even the way that we live in society. And last week we we started with what we could call Chapter 1 of rewriting your story by talking about simplicity. The idea was simple-that the way that God is not through more. The way we find God typically is through less. By that, what I talked about last week was that underneath the clutter of our lives, underneath the mental clutter, the physical clutter, the clutter of our lives, there's a place where God dwells within our hearts. The way we find ourselves in that place where God dwells within our hearts is by simplifying our lives. That was Chapter 1. Well today's Chapter 2 and the theme of our chapter 2 is division verse kingdom or a simple way maybe to think about it is a divisive mind versus the mind of Christ. That's what we're talking about today. And so as we get started let's begin with prayer because I'm going to need it to get through the next 12 minutes or so.

Let's pray. Help us to be present to you today, oh God, even as you are here present with us and through us. I ask this through Christ. Amen.

So the story behind our story today in Mark 8 is that if you look earlier on in the chapter Jesus multiplies loaves of bread and feeds 4000 people. Just after that happens then the Pharisees approach Jesus and they want Jesus to sort of do like their own personal magic show. That's the way I described what happens. The Pharisees go to Jesus they say Jesus you know that you did this miracle with the loaves but we would like our own personal sign. We want our own personal magic show which leads to our story today. By the time we get to our story today Jesus is telling his disciples now to beware. Beware of -it says -the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod. Now if you do a little textual research on Herod, another translation of the word Herod here is Herodians. So basically Jesus says be aware or be careful with the yeast of the Pharisees and the Herodians is another way maybe to interpret that verse.

Now, we will start with that word yeast. I'm not a baker. I don't know how to make bread. I know how to make it my way to a fresh market. I know how to make my way to the Great Harvest Place, but I don't know how to make bread. I hear that yeast or another translation would be leaven is very important when making and baking bread. So basically the way I understand it is leaven or yeast is saved back from an old batch of dough and added to a new batch of dough in order to help the bread rise. Do we have any bakers? Am I saying it right? Is that how do you do it? So the old piece is saved so the new can rise. Well in the first century context, yeast or leaven was a metaphor that was typically used for moral corruption. All right? So the idea was just a little bit of moral corruption when it enters the dough can make the whole thing rise into something that was never intended to be. So here is Jesus saying be careful with the leaven. Be careful of the yeast. Be careful the leaven and the yeast of the Pharisees and the Herodians.

Now who are the Pharisees becomes the question right. Who are they. Well the name Pharisee literally means separate. Another translation can be the name can be interpreter. They were they were renowned for their interpretation of the Bible and its application in everyday life. So basically if I was going to say that simply, the Pharisees were sort of like a fraternity of early Judaism that were, I would probably say, overly committed to implementing the rules of the Bible in everyday life almost to the point where the Pharisees even wanted the everyday person to live by the purity laws of the Old Testament. A lot of the purity laws were only implemented by the priest, and so they wanted even the everyday person to obey those types of rules. The mantra kind of was every house is a temple. Every table is an altar. Every man- sorry women- is a priest. So we all have to live by the priestly rules. That was kind of their thing. And in the Gospels particularly they were the antagonist of Jesus. They were always at odds with each other because Jesus was always breaking the rules. I mean Jesus always pushing the envelope, always breaking the rules. That's who the Pharisees are. They're like the good church goer of the first century context. To be honest with you that's what they are.

Now who are the Herodians? Well as the name suggests the Herodians are the people that support Herod. Herod was not a nice guy as the story is told. I mean the family of Herod tried to kill Jesus. Remember that story? The Herod that I think Jesus would be talking about here is responsible for- or ultimately responsible- for beheading John the Baptist. He was ruthless. He killed anyone who got in his way- even his own family. He was the epitome of power and prestige and money and control and all those things. He's the epitome of all that. So here you have Jesus saying, interestingly enough, "Be careful with the Pharisees and the Herodians." It's interesting he puts the two together. For some reason these two have an odd marriage for whatever reason. He's telling his followers to be careful with it.

So the question is, what did Jesus do that ticked them both off? What did Jesus do that these two groups of people wouldn't like him? And the best I can understand what it is that made them so mad at Jesus was that, quite frankly, Jesus believed in feeding all people. Remember the story began the chapter? He feeds everyone. And the reason that Jesus believed in feeding all people is because he believed that the love of God didn't have any boundaries or borders. And that made the Pharisees mad and that made the Herodians mad. What's curious to me also is as the story ends, we are left with the disciples not even getting the message. Jesus says disciples, 'Don't you get it? Don't you see it? Don't you hear?' The disciples don't even get it.

And can I just be honest with you this morning. I mean I don't have a lot of words left. If I was to be honest with this morning, I wonder sometimes maybe if the disciples even to this day don't get it. We struggle with this. The number one thing people think of when they hear the word Christian today is judgmental. Google it. That's sad. I mean the number one thing people should think of when they hear the word Christian is love, compassion, and kindness, humility- all these kinds of things. But no, they think judgmental which is why we at Methodist Temple are talking about being non-judgmental. It's not like we want to say that. It's not like we want to make that our mantra. We feel like we have to make our montra. When there's so many in the name of Christ that are living opposite of that, we want to be a different place. You want to be a different place.

Honestly I'm just going get myself in so much trouble today. I do that from time to time. It happens about every quarter of every year. I preach a sermon that gets me in trouble. So here we go, let's get it over with. I'll be nice next week. I'm being nice today- I'm trying to be nice. I think what Jesus is really teaching us is a message that we really need to hear today. And he's teaching us about what it looks like to have a healthy religion and healthy politics too. And they're Pharisees and Rhodesians mentioned. Right? We can go all over if we want to. But he says what he says. A healthy religion. What's that look like? What's that mean? A healthy religion is about bringing people together. The root word for religion comes from a Latin word which means to bind. A healthy religion it brings people together, unites people, celebrates the life of people. That's a healthy religion.

An unhealthy religion divides people and drives them apart. Politics. I use the word politics here not in the way that we think of it today. To be clear, this is a nonpartisan point I'm about to make. The word politics in our minds is a nasty word. It means division. It means like tribalism. It means what Jesus is really teaching us is a message that we really need to hear today. And he's teaching us about what it looks like to have a healthy religion and healthy politics too. And they're Pharisees and Rhodesians mentioned. Right? We can go all over if we want to. But he says what he says. A healthy religion. What's that look like? What's that mean? A healthy religion is about bringing people together. The root word for religion comes from a Latin word which means to bind. A healthy religion it brings people together, unites people, celebrates the life of people. That's a healthy religion.

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I think about something Peter Story once said. Peter Story was a bishop in South Africa during the apartheid years. He is a Methodist Bishop which you should be proud that he's a Methodist. This guy is a rock star. He's just awesome. But he stood out to the apartheid government. One of the ones that did. And one of the things he said when we met with him- I went with a group and then we met with him a couple of years ago- one of the things he said to us that will never ever go away in my mind- it's like seared into my heart because when he said this he was weeping from the things he saw the government do and the things he saw the Christians do and not do- he looked at us and he said, 'you know friends what starts with religion ends in politics so choose your faith wisely'. Choose your faith wisely.

Our faith is in Christ. Our faith is in Christ. When we use the word Christ, of course we think of Jesus, but the word Christ means the anointed one. To put it together Jesus is the anointed one of God to teach us as he teaches us the truth about who God is and what God is about. As we look at that Jesus the Christ, what does he teach us? He teaches us that as we look out into the world that everything is anointed with the presence of God. Everything is Christ and is the anointed of God. I mean when you think about things that Jesus said. He said look at the birds. Look at the flowers. There it is. He said look at the children. There it is. Look at the poor. There it is. Even look at your enemies. He says that God sends rain on the just and the unjust- that's Jesus words here. God sends rains on the just and the unjust- even the people you disagree with and you don't like. There it is. I would add, look at yourself. There it is.

Christ is in all things. And so the best way to love God is is going to be very simple. Love everything and everyone. There it is. That's it. That's at the end of the day I know it won't settle well with the spirit of the Pharisees and the Herodians. Their heresy is this: they choose to only see the presence in their club. It's not bad to have religious beliefs. It's not bad to have political beliefs. It's just wrong whenever you choose not to see the presence of God in someone that doesn't share your religious beliefs or political beliefs. That's what's wrong. That's what's wrong. You choose not to see Christ in them.

The story comes to my mind- and I'm over my 12 minute marker- but the story that comes my mind is a story of a mystic who went off into the wilderness to find God. I learned about God. The mystic went away and came back to the village and the villagers asked me, they said, 'mystic what did you learn?' The mystic says, 'well I learned that everywhere I go and everything I see I see the cross. I see the face of Christ.' That's just the message. It's nonpartisan. It's not divisive, but that's the way that we live our lives. Friends hear me, you know this and I know this, we live in a time where we need this from the church, from the people who associate themselves with the name of Jesus.

Today is a day in which we live into this, of course. It's world communion. World Communion is about celebrating the presence of Christ that transcends denominations, transcends theologies. We as Christians everywhere come together to eat from this table of this one that we call Jesus the Christ who believed in feeding everyone. Today celebrate the unity which is as we eat from this table. Amen.

#### COMMUNION

#### \*LAST HYMN TFWS #2026

"Halle, Halle Halle"

#### \*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

#### BENEDICTION

#### POSTLUDE

"Alleluia! Christ Is Risen" by Santo Domingo/M. Bedford