

Our faith in Christ does not free us from works but from false opinions concerning works, that is, from the foolish presumption that justification is acquired by works. Faith redeems, corrects, and preserves our consciences so that we know that righteousness does not consist in works, although works neither can nor ought to be wanting; just as we cannot be without food and drink and all the works of this mortal body, yet our righteousness is not in them, but in faith; and yet those works of the body are not to be despised or neglected on that account.

Martin Luther

Love slays what we have been that we may be what we were not.

St. Augustine

God has a story for you. As you listen to the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to plant it in your heart, you will hear the story. It is in the hearing that we learn of the love that casts out our fears. And when we obey that voice of love, we allow God's grace to live and act through us. God's life in us – this is true freedom.

Rose Marie Miller

Unless we are stirred up to the hope of eternal life, the world will quickly draw us to itself. For as it is only confidence in the Divine goodness that induces us to serve God, so it is only the expectation of final redemption that keeps us from giving way.

John Calvin

Commentary on First Thessalonians

RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

T U S C A L O O S A , A L A B A M A

September 27, 2020 • 8:30 & 10:30 Services • Rev. Jeff Pate, Pastor

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

8:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Jimmy Hopper
Lorrie Pate, piano

10:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Allen Powers
Ginny Coleman, piano

WELCOME

Program all communication devices to be in silent mode. Thank you.

PRELUDE

Please use this time for prayer and meditation as we prepare to go before the living God in worship.

PRAISE

CALL TO WORSHIP: *based on Psalm 105*

Pastor: Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!

All: We will sing praises to him and tell of all his wondrous works!

Pastor: Glory in his name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!

**All: We will seek the Lord and his strength.
We will seek his presence continually!**

Pastor: Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles,
and the judgments he uttered.

**All: We worship with thanksgiving because he is the Lord our God
and he remembers his covenant forever.**

Pastor: Come, let us worship!

HYMN: 53 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
 O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
 All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near,
 join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
 shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
 Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
 granted in what he ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee!
 Surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee;
 ponder anew what the Almighty will do,
 if with his love he befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, who with marvelous wisdom hath made thee,
 decked thee with health, and with loving hand guided and stayed thee.
 How oft in grief hath not he brought thee relief,
 spreading his wings to o'ershade thee!

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
 All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!
 Let the amen sound from his people again;
 gladly fore'er we adore him.

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND 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.
 Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.*

CONFESSION

SCRIPTURE READING: *Leviticus 9:9-18*

9“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God. ¹¹You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. ¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. ¹³You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. ¹⁵You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. ¹⁷You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN: *A Puritan Prayer*

O Lover of the loveless, it is your will for me to love you with my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. But I am not sufficient for these things. There is by nature no pure love in my soul; every affection in me is turned away from you; I am bound by sin and cannot love you, even as lovely as you are, until you set me free. But I praise you because by your grace, I am freed and enabled to serve you, for I believe you are my God in Jesus, and that through him I am redeemed, and my sins are forgiven. May your Spirit draw me nearer to you and your ways. Order my steps by your holy Word. Spirit of love, make me like the loving Jesus that I may shine before other people for your glory. The more your love accomplishes in me and through me, humble me all the more. Keep me meek, lowly, and always ready to give you honor. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *from 1 John 3*

- Pastor: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.
- All: **By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.**
- Pastor: And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.
- All: **Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.**
- Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.
- All: **And also with you.**

HYMN: 500 “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and pow’r.

Not the labors of my hands can fulfil thy law’s demands;
could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone; thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the Fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath, when mine eyelids close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown, see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

COMMITMENT

OFFERING

**Tithes and offerings will be collected by deacons following the morning service as congregants leave the sanctuary.*

COMMITMENT

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

Westminster Confession of Faith 10.1, “Of Effectual Calling” (Modern English Version)

All those—and only those—whom God has predestined to life, he is pleased to call effectually in his appointed and accepted time, by his Word and Spirit. He calls them from the state of sin and death—in which they are by nature—to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. In this calling, God enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly, so that they understand the things of God. He takes away their hearts of stone and gives them hearts of flesh, renews their wills, and by his almighty power turns them to what is good and effectually draws them to Jesus Christ. Yet he does this in such a way that they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

RESPONSE: “Gloria Patri”

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

HYMN: 341 “O Breath of Life, Come Sweeping through Us”

○ Breath of life, come sweeping through us, revive your church with life and pow’r;
○ Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us, and fit your church to meet this hour.

○ Wind of God, come bend us, break us, till humbly we confess our need;
then in your tenderness remake us, revive, restore, for this we plead.

○ Breath of love, come breathe within us, renewing thought and will and heart;
come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us, revive your church in every part.

○ Heart of Christ, once broken for us, ‘tis where we find our strength and rest;
our broken, contrite hearts now solace, and let your waiting church be blest.

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting, equip your church to spread the light.

PREACHING OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: *1 Thessalonians 1*

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

²We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,
³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and
steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that
he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power
and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to
be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you
received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became
an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For not only has the word of
the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has
gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹For they themselves report
concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from
idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he
raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Pastor: The grass withers, the flower fades,
All: **but the word of our God will stand forever.**

SERMON:

“Evidences of Grace”

Rev. Jeff Pate

I. Salutation and affirmation

No common assembly

United to the One God (Father and Son)

Knowing the Savior's "full name"

II. Gospel fruit within the congregation results in thanksgiving to God.

Work of faith

Labor of love

Steadfastness of hope

III. Spiritual fruit reveals God's love for His people in action.

Loved by God

Chosen by God

The Holy Spirit's power at work

IV. God's action leads to His people's response.

Conviction

Imitation

Proclamation

Repentance/Service

Expectation

COMMUNION

HYMN: “Yet Not I, but through Christ in Me”

What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer,
there is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom,
my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
for my life is wholly bound to his.
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: “All is mine!”
yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark but I am not forsaken,
for by my side, the Savior he will stay.
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing,
for in my need his power is displayed.
To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me,
through the deepest valley he will lead.
Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome,
yet not I, but through Christ in me.

www.cityalightmusic.com

RESPONSIVE READING:

Pastor: Hear the words of our Savior: “Come to me, all you 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 humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Come, then, for all is ready.

All: **We come at our Savior's invitation, not because we are righteous, but because we are penitent, not because we are strong, but because we are weak, not because we are whole, but because we are broken.**

Pastor: Come, then, for all is ready. Christ was raised to life, death is swallowed up, victory is won. Alleluia!

All: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Riverwood Presbyterian uses wine in the celebration of Holy Communion. If you would prefer non-alcoholic grape juice, please take a cup from the inner circle of the tray.

BENEDICTION

HYMN: “Yet Not I, but through Christ in Me”

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven.
The future sure, the price it has been paid,
for Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
and he was raised to overthrow the grave.
To this I hold, my sin has been defeated.
Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh, the chains are released, I can sing: “I am free!”
yet not I, but through Christ in me.

With every breath I long to follow Jesus,
for he has said that he will bring me home.
And day by day I know he will renew me,
until I stand with joy before the throne.
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
All the glory ever more to him.
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:
“Yet not I but through Christ in me!”

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BENEDICTION

DISMISSING HYMN: 263 “Lift High the Cross” v. 4

Refrain:

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim,
till all the world adore his sacred name.

4. Thy kingdom come, that earth’s despair may cease
beneath the shadow of its healing peace.

(Refrain)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

September 27 Tristan Drinkard

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

COVENANT KIDS CLUB AND YOUTH GROUP

Covenant Kids Club and Youth Group meet tonight. Covenant Kids Club meets from 5:30-6:30pm behind the Fellowship Hall, and Youth Group meets from 5:30-7:00pm behind the Administration Building.

PIER GROUPS

We want everyone in the church to have the opportunity to be involved in the study and application of God's Word with a group of other believers. Small group bible studies (Pier Groups) are forming for this fall. Some groups will meet in person and others will be online. Please go to the church's website (riverwoodchurch.org) to sign up.

STAGGS-POWERS PIER GROUP

The Staggs-Powers pier group will be from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays at the Staggs' house starting **October 1**. The study is a review of the RC Sproul Ligonier series "Consequences of Ideas," which is a look at Western philosophy beginning with the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales. It will then progress to modern philosophy concepts while comparing all to Christian perspectives and influences. Surprisingly enough, turns out Solomon was right in that there is nothing new under the sun! So many of the ideas espoused in today's culture have flourished before. Please sign up on the pier group section of the Riverwood website to join the discussion.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through August 2020:

Operating Income:	\$252,590.76
Operating Expense*:	\$265,942.42
Net Income:	(\$13,351.66)
Designated gifts:	\$67,458.45
Building loan balance:	\$742,200.67

**Includes the minimum monthly building loan payment*