

Menifee United Church of Christ

Established in 1962 by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

SERMON FOR

March 8, 2015

“You Are The Glory Of God”



Reverend Bill Freeman: Senior Minister
Eckart Seeber: Music Minister
Marie Paulus-Nyquist: Children's Minister
Richard Goward: Lay Reader

Menifee United Church of Christ

Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 AM

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Live Life Fully Alive!

Psalm 19:1-5

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Exodus 20:1-6

Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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“You Are The Glory of God”

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A priest and a nun are driving home from a trip when their car breaks down. They can't get it fixed, so they spend the night in a hotel. The hotel has only one room available. The priest said to the nun, "I don't think the Lord would mind if we spent the night together in one room. I'll sleep on the couch, you can have the bed." The nun said, "Okay." A little later the nun said, "I'm cold." The priest said, "I'll get you a blanket." A little later the nun said, "I'm still cold." The priest said, "I'll get you another

blanket.” A little later the nun said, “I’m still cold. I don’t think the Lord would mind if we acted as husband and wife for just one night.” The priest said, “You’re right. So get up and get your own blanket.”

You are the glory of God. That’s what I want to talk with you about today. You are the glory of God. Whether you’re cold or warm. Whether you’re married or single. Whether you’re spiritual or religious. You are the glory of God. Whether you’re rich or poor. Whether you’re tidy or messy. Whether you’re active or sedate. You are the glory of God. Whether you’re serious or funny. Whether you’re extravagant or thrifty. Whether you’re outgoing or shy. You are the glory of God.

Sister Joan Chittister felt called to become a nun when she was just 3 years old. Sister Joan Chittister is 78 today, and has been a nun now for 62 years. Sister Joan Chittister has written 50 books. She says, “It is possible to go beyond religion and become a prayer.” She says, “God...is life...all of energy...the seed of everything that ever existed.” She says God is not a Catholic God, but the God of all. She is full of compassion for all. She is a champion for justice, fairness, and equality. She lives out the teachings of Jesus. I have only read a couple of her books. I know she’s a very spiritual person. I wish, if she wanted to, she could become a priest...or the Pope. Sister Joan Chittister is the glory of God. And you are the glory of God. I believe that’s true, because the Bible tells me so.

Psalm 19 seems to begin as a hymn. Today it would probably be called a praise song. It praises God as creator. It starts off, “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork.” It’s called General Revelation. General Revelation is when we see the glory of God all around us. General Revelation is different from Special Revelation, which is when we see the glory of God in the Bible, in miracles,

in the supernatural. General Revelation is when we see the glory of God in the natural: in the heavens, in the earth, in all that is. We have to have eyes to see it. We have to have ears to hear it. We have to have a heart to feel it. I see the glory of God in snow-capped mountains when it's 75 degrees outside. I hear the glory of God in birds singing beautifully. I feel the glory of God when one person helps another person. What is telling the glory of God? The heavens are telling the glory of God. The Bible is telling the glory of God. And you are telling the glory of God. And when you are telling the glory of God, I believe you are the glory of God. (Say to those around you: You are the glory of God. You are the glory of God. You are the glory of God.)

Exodus 20 is one of the places in the Bible where we read The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are the religious and moral teachings of Judaism and Christianity. Actually there are 613 commandments in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus would later reduce them to just two or three: Love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself. Exodus 20 says these are God's Commandments. God says, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you...out of the house of slavery." God says, "You shall have no other gods before me." God says, I will have, "steadfast love to...those who love me and keep my commandments." Why did God bring the Jews out of the house of slavery? Why does God bring us out of the house of slavery, whatever we are a slave to: drugs, hatred, selfishness? Because God loves the Jews. Because God loves us. Because God loves everyone. The Jews are the glory of God. We are the glory of God. Everyone is the glory of God. You are the glory of God.

John 2 shows us Jesus in the temple getting righteously indignant. He doesn't get angry! Of course not. Because anger is one of the 7 Deadly Sins. And we've been taught that Jesus doesn't sin. But he does get righteously indignant when he finds people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, in the temple; and when

he sees the money changers changing money. So he makes a whip of cords and drives the animals out of the temple. (I hope it's okay when we do our blessing of the animals service.) Jesus overturns the money changers' tables. Jesus says, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" Jesus revered God's house. Jesus called it, "A house of prayer." Jesus knew it was the glory of God. This church is God's house. This church is a house of prayer. This church is the glory of God. All who come here are the glory of God. You are the glory of God.

Matthew 25 talks about the end times, Armageddon, the Second Coming of Jesus. Jesus says, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory." Then Jesus will call to him those who are blessed. Who will be blessed? Those who helped Jesus. Jesus says, "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

According to Matthew, "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' Then Jesus will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Do you get it? When you give food to the hungry, when you give drink to the thirsty, when you welcome the stranger, when you clothe the naked, when you care for the sick, when you visit the prisoner, and when you help, "the least of these," you are the glory of God.

I went before the Menifee City Council this past week. I said that as I understand it a headcount was done recently of the homeless in the city of Menifee. I said I've heard that the total number of homeless in the city of Menifee was said to be 12. I said if that's the case then my church houses 50% of the homeless in the city of Menifee. I said we house six homeless people at the present time. I said whether the number is 12 or 60, I think the city should provide a shelter for the homeless. I said that if a homeless shelter is not on the city's agenda, then I would like to put it on the city's agenda. Mayor Pro Tem John Denver told me, "You just put it on the city's agenda." I don't know what's going to happen in the future. Maybe the city will build a homeless shelter. Maybe churches will get together and provide a homeless shelter. Maybe somehow this church could one day provide a homeless shelter for all the homeless in Menifee. But I was just so proud of this church and what it does for the homeless. It reminded me that: You are the glory of God.

John Legend and Common won the Oscar recently for Best Original Song for "Glory," featured in the movie, "Selma." "Selma" was the movie about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leading a civil rights march in the '60s from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The song, "Glory," begins, "One day, when the glory comes, it will be ours, it will be ours." When they accepted their Oscars John Legend sounded like a prophet. John Legend said that the struggle for justice is right now. John Legend said that the Voting Rights Act is being compromised across the country right now. John Legend said that more black men are in jail right now than were enslaved in 1850. This country has a long way to go before racism is eliminated. This country has a long way to go before racism is eliminated from police departments. This country has a long way to go before racism is eliminated from people's hearts and minds. When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., worked to eliminate racism, he was the glory of God. When John Legend and Common work to

eliminate racism, they are the glory of God. When you work to eliminate racism, you are the glory of God.

The Von Trapp Family escaped from a racist regime, the Nazis, in the lead up to World War Two. The Von Trapp Family sang their way across Europe to America. The Von Trapp Family was the focus of the Broadway musical and the film, “The Sound Of Music,” as you probably know. We are blessed to have our own musical family at this church. The Seebers. Eckart, our wonderful music director. Christine, and her voice of an angel. And Ella and Jackson, their musically talented children. The Seeber Family lifts this church up with their sound of music. The Seeber Family makes this church sing. The Seeber Family is the glory of God. And you are the glory of God.

Jesus says who you are in the Gospel of Matthew, in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth.” Jesus says, “You are the light of the world.” And I believe Jesus would also say: You are the glory of God.

Let us pray...

*God of Love,
Help us to know that we are the glory of God.
Help us to help others to know
that they are the glory of God.
And help us to proclaim the good news,
that the glory of God is everywhere.
Now and forevermore.
By the power of the Holy Spirit.
And in the name of Jesus.
Amen.*

THE GOLDEN RULE

*What is hateful to you
do not do to others.*

Judaism

*Do to others what you would
have them do to you.*

Christianity

*None of you believes until he wishes for his
brother what he wishes for himself.*

Islam

*Do not do to others
what would cause pain if done to you.*

Hinduism

*Hurt not others in ways that you yourself
would find hurtful.*

Buddism

*Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain,
and your neighbor's loss as your loss.*

Taoism

*Do not do to others
what you do not want them to do to you.*

Confucianism

*Treat other people
as you'd want to be treated in their situation.*

Humanism