

**Racine UMC - Sumner Center – Wykoff UMC**

As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.

May we together experience the presence of God

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**We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord****Prelude****Welcome****Prelude****Welcome****Announcements**

Why do we tell stories? We tell stories to share experiences, to teach lessons, to create community, to reveal ourselves, to gain attention, to lighten a heavy moment, or . . . lots of reasons. Stories have power and have an effect beyond the words of the story. Stories shape our experience of the world; they shape us in that world. Sometimes, stories dream of a world that could be or might be. Everyone leans in when stories are told.

So, why did Jesus tell stories? For all the reasons above, no doubt. Something is happening when Jesus tells stories, something beyond the words of the stories themselves. Even when the words are hard to hear.

Let's face it, sometimes talking with Jesus is a difficult task. Or maybe we should say, listening to Jesus can sometimes be hard. Jesus has a way of getting to difficult, hard-to-hear issues quickly and easily. Sometimes it is in a story where he is revealing to us our own secret sins; other times, it is the answer to a question that catches us in our prejudice or blindness. Sometimes, it is a teaching that we struggle to wrap our heads around. And today's gospel reading is a hard one for sure.

Today we hear Jesus tell us to hate our mothers and fathers in order to follow him.  
Why did he say this?

Why does Jesus have to make it so hard to follow him?

He says, "Follow me," but we've got to leave everything behind to do so. Why? Why can't we add it to our long list of other interests? Our overfull schedule of appointments and good deeds? Why can't Jesus be satisfied with giving him what time we have to give? At least that's something, right? At least we're giving it a try. When we can. When nothing else is going on. Surely that ought to count for something.

Today we hear Jesus say "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and even life itself, cannot be my disciple" (14:26). Um. Let's be honest here. That's not going to happen. It just isn't. At least in the usual way we understand those words and that experience and those emotions.

And it seems to me that there are other places where Jesus tells us to love and care for one another, to forgive over and over, to not condemn, to . . . Well, you get the point. This passage doesn't jive with our overall understanding of what Jesus asks us to do. It just doesn't.

So, we have two possible responses. One is to just pretend we didn't read it.

Ok that just doesn't seem right either do it? But we do it all the time. We pretend Jesus didn't say a lot of things that he said. We just focus on the doable stuff, the stuff we like, the stuff that affirms us as we are. And skim over the undesirable part.

Or we can response by going back to the text and wrestling with it a little while. Maybe there is something there, a hint, a translation error, an editorial gloss we can undo and get back to something that lets us breathe a little bit better.

Or, there is a possible third response, we listen again, trying to find some meaning that is escaping us.

You see the bulk of today's passage is two parables about making plans, about counting the cost. One is a king going to war or preparing for a war that is coming and deciding whether he can wage this war or if he needs to pursue for peace. The other is a construction worker who is building a tower and needs to know whether he has the means to finish it.

Jesus is clearly asking the large crowd behind him whether they really want to make this journey, whether they want to fight the battle that is coming, whether they want to build the tower that he wants them to build.

He is asking them and us today - Are you in or not in? And let's be clear, it isn't going to be a walk in the park. This is a battle for your own and everyone else's soul; this is nothing less than the construction of the kingdom of God going on within and around you. Are you committed to this transformation? Are you willing to invest the blood, sweat, and tears it is going to take?

"Sure," we shout, confident souls that we are. At least right now, in this moment, safe and secure from all alarms. But when the going gets tough, then what? When we stumble and fall, then what? When tragedy strikes, then what? That's what he is asking us to consider. And when we sober up to the reality of the question, we can say, "We want to. But what will it take?" And he'll answer, "Give up everything. Everything. Every thing. Father, mother, wife, children . . ." Everything is a daunting list. Your own life. Your pride and greed, your gifts and talents, the things that give you joy, and the things that make you roll your eyes and sigh. Everything. Give it up.

You can't be serious. He can't be serious. Ah, but he is. Give it up. And follow him. Carry his cross on which hangs father, mother, wife, children, you own life . . . Everything. Here's what he asks: "Don't love them with your love; love them with mine. Don't cling to people or things because they meet your needs or serve you. Receive them as a gift from the one you follow."

Compared to his love working through us, ours is feeble and broken and selfish and temporary and almost looks like hate. So, give that kind of love up. It doesn't serve.

Instead, we can love as he loves. We can see through his eyes; we can serve with his hands. Then when we pick up, in his love, those we call family, we find more than what we thought we had. Then when we begin to build, we might actually finish, even as we are being finished in him.

These are his words - words we believe are valuable, words with which we need to wrestle, words that we need, somehow, to learn to live by.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP (FOR LABOR DAY SUNDAY)**

Come, all who labor and are weighed down with responsibility, uncertainty, and worry.

**We come, because the load we carry is heavier than we can bear alone.**

Come, all you who seek to relate work and worship, leisure and service, into a meaningful whole.

**We gather for spiritual renewal and practical challenge, for help in making choices and carrying out our commitments.**

Come, sinner and saint, with your hatreds and loves, your failures and successes, your sorrows and joys.

**We respond to the Spirit's leading and open ourselves to receive God's gracious gifts.**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

**God of power and mercy,  
only with your help  
can we offer you fitting service and praise.**

**May we live the faith we profess  
and trust your promise of eternal life.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

### **Praise Hymn UMH #382     "Have Thine Own Way Lord"**

Author: Adelaide A. Pollard (1902)

Publication Date: 1989

Tune Information

Name: ADELAIDE

Composer: George C. Stebbins (1907)

<http://www.gbod3.org/sorter/audio/382.mp3>

**1. Have thine own way, Lord!  
Have thine own way!  
Thou art the potter;  
I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me  
after thy will,  
while I am waiting,  
yielded and still.**

**2. Have thine own way, Lord!  
Have thine own way!  
Search me and try me,  
Savior today!  
Wash me just now, Lord,  
wash me just now,  
as in thy presence  
humbly I bow.**

**3. Have thine own way, Lord!**  
Have thine own way!  
Wounded and weary,  
help me I pray!  
Power, all power,  
surely is thine!  
Touch me and heal me,  
Savior divine!

**4. Have thine own way, Lord!**  
Have thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being  
absolute sway.  
Fill with thy Spirit  
till all shall see  
Christ only, always,  
living in me!

## We Hear God's Word

**Gospel Reading..... Luke 14:25-33**

**New Revised Standard Version**

### **The Cost of Discipleship**

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them, 26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Word of God, For the People of God, **Thanks Be to God!**

### **Faith Hymn UMH #338**

### **"Where He Lead Me"**

Author: E. W. Blandy (1890)

Publication Date: 1989

Name: NORRIS

Composer: John S. Norris (1890)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luKHrhD-1gI>

**1. I can hear my Savior calling,**  
**I can hear my Savior calling,**  
**I can hear my Savior calling,**  
**"Take thy cross and follow, follow me."**

#### **Refrain:**

**Where he leads me I will follow,**  
**where he leads me I will follow,**  
**where he leads me I will follow;**  
**I'll go with him, with him all the way.**

**2. I'll go with him through the garden,**  
**I'll go with him through the garden,**  
**I'll go with him through the garden,**

**I'll go with him, with him all the way.**  
**(Refrain)**

**3. I'll go with him through the judgment,**  
**I'll go with him through the judgment,**  
**I'll go with him through the judgment,**  
**I'll go with him, with him all the way.**  
**(Refrain)**

**4. He will give me grace and glory,**  
**he will give me grace and glory,**  
**he will give me grace and glory,**  
**and go with me, with me all the way.**  
**(Refrain)**

## **\*Meditation\***

### **RESPONSE TO THE WORD**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I 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.**

### **INVITATION**

*(Pastor stands behind the Lord's table.)*

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,  
who earnestly repent of their sin  
and seek to live in peace with one another.  
Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

### **CONFESSİON AND PARDON.**

**Merciful God,  
we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have failed to be an obedient church.  
We have not done your will,  
we have broken your law,  
we have rebelled against your love,  
we have not loved our neighbors,  
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.  
Forgive us, we pray.  
Free us for joyful obedience,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hear the good news:  
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;  
that proves God's love toward us.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!  
Glory to God. Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING\***

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,  
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image  
and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed,  
your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity,  
made covenant to be our sovereign God,  
and spoke to us through the prophets.

And so, with your people on earth  
and all the company of heaven  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

Your Spirit anointed him  
to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
and to announce that the time had come  
when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection  
you gave birth to your Church,  
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,  
and made with us a new covenant  
by water and the Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus ascended,  
he promised to be with us always,  
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,  
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,  
gave it to his disciples, and said:  
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,  
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
"Drink from this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ's offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,  
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,  
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other,  
and one in ministry to all the world,  
until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,  
now and forever. Amen.

The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.  
The blood of Christ, given for you. Amen.

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

### **“Wrap Us in Your Love”**

Lord of the cross, you call us to follow you. We mouth a yes and nod an okay, but do we know what you've asked us to do? We're to love you more than others? Some say that cross is too heavy. Still, you compel us to follow, knowing that this cross is too heavy for us to carry alone. You say, count the cost and consider what discipleship is. Sometimes we squirm and say the cost is too great and the sacrifices too numerous. Still, you compel us to follow. The cross you ask us to carry is not nearly as heavy as the cross you carried for us. Nevertheless, we complain – and you listen. We search for an easier alternative – and you watch us. God, help us to admit when we get frustrated by the enormity of discipleship. Extend grace and mercy toward us. Wrap us inside of your unconditional love. And patiently compel us to follow you again. We come to you this day joining in the prayer our Savior and redeemer taught us to pray, Our Father...

### **\*Departing Hymn UMH #666      “Shalom To You”**

Author: Elise S. Eslinger (1980)

Publication Date: 1989

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Tune Information

Harmonizer: Carlton R. Young (1989)

Copyright: Harm. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3TqB5YQ4\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3TqB5YQ4_4)

**Shalom to you now, shalom,  
my friends, May God's full mercies  
bless you, my friends.  
In all your living  
and through your loving,  
Christ be your shalom,  
Christ be your shalom**

## **BENEDICTION**

Lord, please look on us with grace;  
watch over us with love;  
and surround us with peace. Amen.

## **Postlude**