

SERMON ON THE MOUNT MENNONITE CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 5, 2021
JOY SHINES

PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE LAMP

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 100 VT 20

INVOCATION VT 866

PASSING THE PEACE

HYMN Here I am to worship VT 227

SCRIPTURE Philippians 2:12-30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

HYMN Heaven Is Singing for Joy VT 665

OFFERING PRAYER VT 1022
OFFERTORY

COMMUNION VT 941, 942

SHARING TIME

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER VT 997

TEACHER/STUDENT BLESSING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN Heart with Loving Heart United VT 813

BENEDICTION Based on Philippians 2:12-13

As we go from this gathered worship, may we continue to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in us, enabling us both to will and to work for God's good pleasure.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Paul may have been experiencing extensive physical darkness in prison and may also have been experiencing the loss of his eyesight. What's the darkest thing you've ever experienced? Not metaphorically "dark" or spiritually "dark," but physically dark (like a cave or a part of the world with low light pollution)?

When have you grumbled and complained about doing a task? What did it accomplish?

Contrast is what makes bright things seem bright. Paul is suggesting that Christians can "shine like stars" by living in contrast to the world around them. Who are the stars (people who inspire you) in your life?

Which spiritual practices address our inner transformation? Which spiritual practices address our outer witness? How do we bring these practices together in a healthy contrast? What imbalances exist when we emphasize one at the expense of the other?

Paul also addresses a tension that requires a decision: whether to keep Timothy with him. Our spiritual lives also involve moments where we must make a choice, but not every moment is one of them. How hard is it to make a choice? How do we know if it is the right one?

TEACHER/STUDENT BLESSING

God, maker of galaxies who numbers the hairs on our heads,
We praise your name for the goodness of creation and for all the blessings of this life.
We give you thanks for (names of children/ students at LBA).

As Jesus took children into his arms and blessed them,
We bless each child (*here/in our neighborhood*).
By your grace, keep them safe and give them open minds to learn this year.

We give you thanks for (*names of teachers/ staff at LBA*).
Fill them with energy and compassion for their students this year.

We lift up this school community and neighborhood to your care. Amen.