**Culmore United Methodist Church**

**June 16, 2019**

 **Prelude** *Good, Good Father*

I've heard a thousand stories

Of what they think You’re like

But I've heard the tender whisper

Of love in the dead of night

You tell me that You’re pleased

And that I'm never alone.

***Chorus***

 You're a Good Good Father

 It's who You are; It's who You are

 It's who You are

 And I'm loved by You

 It's who I am; It's who I am

 It's who I am.

I've seen many searching for answers

Far and wide

But I know we're all searching for answers

Only You provide

Because You know just what we need Before we say a word.

You are perfect in all of Your ways

You are perfect in all of Your ways

You are perfect in all of Your ways to us

Love so undeniable I can hardly speak

Peace so unexplainable I can hardly think.

As You call me deeper still

As You call me deeper still

As You call me deeper still

Into love love love.

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Shout out to Julia** – the website is really coming along

—she’s been using your pictures,

 so send her more, if you’d like them included.

**Yard Sale next Saturday –** Myrna updates?

**Happy birthday to Eric Johnson!** Are there any birthdays this week?

 If so, let us know so we can wish you many happy returns.

**MAP is up and running at Culmore.**

This FREE health clinic is open on

**Thursdays between 7:00AM – 2:00PM.**

Since there are a limited number of appointments

available each Thursday,

**come at 6:00 AM** to ensure you can be seen.

The clinic offers medical care, social work advocacy,

and professional counseling.

The only requirement is that you come.

**Pastor Nelson** will be back on Monday,

having harassed all the bass he could in Canada.

The fish are very happy to have him leave.

**Annual Conference:**

Pastors Beth and Nelson will be away

during the week

 for the Virginia United Methodist Conference,

I’ll be ordained as a Provisional Elder.

We ask for your prayers!

**Bible Study** is Wednesday, June 118 at 10:00.

**We celebrate Father’s Day.**

**Fathers –** if you’re a father, would you stand?

For all your love, caring, guidance, and patience,

we thank you.

Where would we be without you?

There’s just something special about fathers,

our earthly fathers, as well as our heavenly father.

**Bulletin Scripture:** [**1 John 3:1**](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.1)

Would you look at the front of the bulletin?

This is a message worth repeating.

Our readers will lead us in all three languages:

How great is the love the Father has given to us,

that we should be called children of God;

and that is what we are.

*Fijense que gran amor nos ha dado el Padre,*

 *que se nos llame hijos de Dios!  Y lo somos!*

*Masdan ninyo kung gaanong pagibig ang ipinagkaloob sa atin ng Ama,*

*upang tayo'y mangatawag na mga anak ng Dios;*

*at tayo'y gayon nga.*

What a gift indeed from our heavenly father.

**Baby bird** –**Grackle**

Are any of you birdwatchers?

 I love watching birds in our garden

 and imagining what they’re saying to each other.

Here’s the scene I imagined this week:

There was this grackle family

 chowing down at the bird feeder.

This **big baby grackle**  kept insisting on being fed by **Daddy bird**.

Maybe it was Mama bird,

but I really think it was daddy.

Baby was nearly as big as big as the daddy bird,

 and yet junior keeps chirping loudly to be fed.

*Feed me! Feed me now! Feed me some more!*

Bird feeder is right there in front of Junior,

and yet junior expects his parent to fly over,

get the food, and then give him curb service,

 bringing it to him.

Mind you, Junior could fly just fine,

But he kept hounding hid dad for more.

chirping all the time.

I thought, *Hey!*

 *You’re flying all around,*

*harassing your poor parent.*

*Can’t you fly over there to the feeder*

*and feed yourself?*

That’s so wrong, I felt.

*Tell Junior to do some work himself!*

But patient daddy bird kept feeding his hungry baby bird,

rarely keeping a bit for himself.

Now, that daddy bird made me think of God our Father,

 who patiently feeds us every time we ask, regardless.

That daddy bird made me think of our earthly fathers

who strive to do the same

—to patiently take care of their chirpy babies.

**Tribute to dads?**

 **Lynn and Karen?**

 **Emily?**

**Flowers -**as we pass the peace, please take a flower in honor or memory of your father.

**Passing of the Peace**

**New series on *transforming attitudes.***

By transforming attitudes,

I mean the attitudes and mindsets

that can help us grow our faith.

This is work for us to do:

 to seek to change our attitudes,

to try to grow these *transforming attitudes.*

For if we do, these attitudes will be life-changing,

both with our faith and with the world.

We read about the **fruits of the Spirit** (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

 These fruits are what it looks like

when a person or community

 live in step with the Holy Spirit

What are those fruits?

love, joy, peace,

 forbearance, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness,gentleness and self-control.

They are our attitudes toward each other

 when we live in accord with God,

when we live out God’s love with one another.

These fruits flow out of a maturing faith in God.

As we grow in faith, we blossom in these ways.

That’s all well and good, but how do we get there?

 Mature faith rarely pops up all at once

—it’s a process that lasts all our lives.

That’s the *journey of faith* we’re always talking about.

This is where the need

for transforming attitudes come in.

Yes, we have spiritual practices and behaviors

 – like regular worship, regular prayer, reading scripture, and so on.

But I’m talking today about our *attitudes toward life.*

*How we choose to face the world each day.*

You hear people say *Don’t give me attitude!*

Or *Put that attitude in your pocket and leave it there.*

(Ok, I just made that up.)

But we all hold basic mindsets or attitudes

that shape how we see the world.

Those attitudes then dictate how we act and respond.

So if I think everybody is out to get me

and nobody ever gives me a break,

guess what my attitude is going to be:

***I don’t trust you.***

 ***I know you’re just waiting to put one over on me.***

***I’m SURE not going to turn my back on you.***

With such an attitude, with such mindset,

how much joy and sunshine am I going to notice?

It may be there, but I’m going to be so deep into cynicism

 that I miss all that joy in front of me.

Several of you model for me how to look for the joy.

 No matter what, you focus on the blessings,

you look for the positive,

you strive to see God.

One person always tells me, when I ask how things are going,

 *I can’t complain.*

Someone else, no matter what is happening,

manages to find something good,

some blessing to focus on.

With such an attitude, they embrace all the joy and sunshine they can,

regardless of the challenges along the way.

My brothers and sisters,

to get ourselves aligned with God,

we need to rid ourselves of *bad attitudes.*

We need to change our attitudes, mind sets, and focus

 to grow **and be transformed** by our faith.

If we’re going after money as our number one priority,

are we going to have time and energy to *go after God?*

If we’re always looking down at things that are wrong,

how can we look up and see God?

If we’ve trained ourselves to focus on what’s wrong in our lives,

how are we going to see what is right?

—and there’s plenty of both around us.

**? High school Basketball player from Mississippi**

40 years after the championship game he lost,

he still can’t let it go.

He still feels like a failure

for not making that dunk shot 40 years ago.

It’s the lens through which he filters everything

 in his world today.

*Would a, could a, should a* attitude has a tight hold on him.

Have you ever thought about what attitudes grow our faith?

 What comes to mind for you?

Can you write down on the enclosed sheet,

 the top two (or more!) attitudes that draw you closer to God?

On the back, can you write the top two

things that pull you away?

Put them in the collection plate,

 if you will,

and I’ll compile them and preach on them

 in the weeks ahead…

so that we can explore as a community

what brings us closer to God, what pulls us away.

***Wonhee to play music***

Sometimes people say, *that’s just the way I am.*

That may be so, but don’t you want to change

some of your attitudes?

Don’t you want to let go of mindsets

that pull you down and away from God

and instead, cultivate the attitudes

 that lift you up and nearer to God?

**We can change ourselves more than we think, if we’re willing.**

 **I think about this quote by Peter Marshall:**

Most of us know perfectly well what we ought to do;

our trouble is that we do not want to do it.

Old habits and ways of seeing things are just too comfortable.

They’re way too easy to do.

It takes elbow grease,

as my grandmother would say,

to get the work done.

Just like going to the gym, we have to work at changing attitudes.

**Opening Prayer:**

Dear Loving Father,

 We need transforming attitudes. Help us stop looking down and look up to you instead. Show us how to quit running after the world and run to you instead. We need the transformation of rejoicing hearts, loving spirits, and praying souls. We need your transforming touch. *Amen*

**Responsive Reading: Romans 12: 2, 9-12**

**(*New Living Translation)***

Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

**Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them.

**Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.**

Love each other with genuine affection,and take delight in honoring each other.  Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.

**Rejoice in our confident hope.**

**Be patient in trouble and keep on praying.**

* **Hymn:** *Change My Heart* **TFWS 2152**

Changing hearts, transforming our attitudes is hard, hard work.

We need each other’s loving kindness, support, and guidance.

 It’s hard to get that on your own.

For example, Nelson is patient with me, just like that daddy bird.

I can’t quit telling him how to drive.

The urge to back-seat drive is stronger than I am.

*Watch out for that car!*

*Turn here!*

 *The GPS doesn’t know what she’s talking about.*

And so on.

*That’s okay, dear,* he says.

 *I’m going to buy you your own little plastic driving wheel,*

 *and then you can help me drive.*

I need his support and encouragement and patience

as I try –still unsuccessfully so far

—to change my attitude,

 To let go of my nervous Nelly ways.

As I said, we need each other’s loving kindness, support, and guidance

to change our hearts and transform our attitudes.

We need to feed each other,

just as we do—literally and figuratively

 —every Sunday after church.

 Community is crucial to growing our faith and love.

That’s why the OT and NT constantly talk about community.

Jesus emphasized community

throughout his earthly ministry.

There’s a reason he sent his disciples out in pairs,

 rather than alone.

 He knew they would needed

each other’s support and guidance.

What did Jesus say in **Matthew 18:20?**

*For where two or three gather in my name,*

*there am I with them .*

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on *transforming attitudes,*

and as I said, I’m going to collect them

and share them with you in depth

over the next few weeks.

**Quick word:** I wholeheartedly embrace interactive, participatory worship—where people share their witnesses,

their musical talents, praying gifts,

 reading gifts, etc.

Someone recently said to me

*At our church, the preacher preaches*

*and we sit and listen.*

My brothers and sisters, worship is not a passive thing.

We are *actively worshipping* together.

That’s why I’ve asked you to share your thoughts

 so ***together*** we can shape our dialogue on transforming attitudes.

For this morning, let’s look at one attitude

 that I’ve found key to growing my faith and my spirit.

**Eeyore**

Who remembers Eeyore? In *Winnie the Pooh,*

Eeyore always saw the things that were wrong;

He always assumed the worst,

 he leaned into gloomy outlooks.

He loses his tail, and he says

*It wasn’t much of a tail, but I’m sort of attached to it.*

When his friends find it, Eeyore says

*Most likely I’ll lose it again, anyway.*

**Eeyore just can’t do happy.**

When we’re constantly looking at the world

from an Eeyore perspective,

nothing’s going to make us happy.

We’re spending all our time

looking for and expecting the worst.

Rejoicing is an attitude we choose,

 whether we are on top of the mountain

or down in the valley.

We worship a joyful God

who calls us to rejoice with Him.

Having a rejoicing spirit is not just a matter

of having good things and situations about you.

 It takes effort to see the blessings.

Truly I believe, we find what we look for.

The more we look for problems,

 the more we’ll find.

When we focus on all the things that go wrong,

we blind ourselves to the little joys in front of us.

As Henri Nouwen said,

 Joy does not simply happen to us.

We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.

What is it Paul tells us about **Rejoicing? Philippians 4: 4-9**

**1st reader** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

**2nd reader** Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

**1st Reader** Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**2nd reader** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Have a rejoicing heart –** look for the good;

Yes, hurt and pain are part of our existence,

but actively choose not to spend your time and energy

dwelling on it. Step away from being **Eeyore.!**

May we choose joy,

may we CHOOSE transforming attitudes,

may we CHOOSE following God, our *good, good Father.*

* **Hymn** *God Leads Us Along* **W&S 3031**

**Community Prayer**

*Heavenly Father, in Your love and grace, You have given us all the freedom of choice, and we thank and praise You for that. Now we need Your help to keep choosing wisely the ways we want to live our lives. Will we acknowledge our need to depend on You, and do the things Your Word shows us lead to abundant lives?*

 *Or will we put that to the side, as we move through our days, distracted by daily activities, letting ourselves be drawn into the ways of the world?*

 *We want to choose joy-filled lives with You! AMEN*

**Anthem**  *Father, We Thank you*    **UMC 563**

**Doxology**  **UMH 95**

* **Hymn** *There’s a Spirit of Love* **W&S 3148**

#### Benediction