

Not Ashamed

October is an odd oasis in the liturgical rhythms of many churches. Some focus on stewardship; but for many, October is the last breath before the holiday season to come and the changing of liturgical seasons and years. To fill this space, then, we present a worship series titled “Not Ashamed” based on the Epistle readings through the month of October. The lectionary walks through the second epistle to Timothy, giving us some of the highlights of this powerful but short letter.

Many biblical scholars cast doubt on whether this is an authentic letter from Paul the apostle, but think it was written with attention to his style and with his name affixed. But the traditional view is that this represents the last written word from Paul and, therefore, is even more poignant. Here is the passing on of wisdom, the commissioning of a successor, or even the blessing of a veteran leader to an up-and-comer.

We, however, focus not on the author but on the content. In this unusual time for us as a denomination, we are calling for a reclaiming of faith, of embracing the relationship between us and Christ. We are calling for and hoping for a revival of the soul and the passion of the church, a passion for the world that surrounds us and the needs of our neighbors. We see in Second Timothy a call to not be ashamed of our faith. This isn’t, however, an invitation to an “in-your-face” kind of faith or one that asserts our “rights” in the face of perceived persecution. Rather, this is an opportunity for us to live out our witness to Christ with compassion and radical hospitality, to engage the world with the hearts of servants, and to engage with our neighbors with the humble joy of those who know forgiveness and grace.

This October can be the perfect time to help the congregation along the discipleship path by shoring up their faith with a worship series designed to help declare that ***we are not ashamed.***

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost – Rekindle the Gift

October 2, 2022 – [2 Timothy 1:1-14](#)

Color: Green

PLANNING NOTES

This series is about claiming the faith we've been given with boldness and enthusiasm. But it is also about honoring those from whom we learned about Christ. So, there can be space for both: making new commitments to following or renewing commitments long standing. There are lots of ways to do this effectively and powerfully in corporate worship. The traditional altar call can still be a moving moment during worship. But for some, the altar call seems overly emotional or even manipulative. So, take care in how the call is issued and how space is made for everyone who wants to come forward to be able to do so.

There are other ways to call for commitment during worship. It can be done in writing, or in a prayer station movement through various places in the sanctuary or beyond. It could also be left to individuals to respond in the quietness of their own hearts. Perhaps a prayer of commitment could be prepared ahead of time and inserted into the bulletin or handed out at the door as a reminder to all who come. Make sure to provide for those who worship online to receive their prayer cards as well. You could mail the cards or provide downloadable cards from the church website or email chain.

The other component of worship during this series is to make space for testimony. Like Timothy, who is reminded of how his mother and grandmother were instrumental in shaping his faith, members could be encouraged to tell the story of those who mentored them as disciples of Jesus Christ. These stories would be recorded on video to be shown during worship or written up and handed out to the congregation as a devotional during the month of October.

Names and images of these mentors could be collected for display, for honoring, and for thanking. When you pray, you can give God thanks for those who have walked alongside us, who have gathered us up when we have been scattered by the struggles of our lives. We can ask God to open our eyes to those we could gather up too, for opportunities to share the faith we have known. When you sing, you can celebrate the legacy of faith: "Faith of our Fathers" and the rewrite "Faith of Our Mothers" and many others.

We rekindle the gift when we acknowledge those who have brought us to this place. We rekindle the gift when we recommit ourselves to this path, to the work of discipleship.

PREACHING NOTES

We can start with the authorship question if we must. But you can't help but wonder how much value is in such an exercise. Some call it an act of honesty or scriptural integrity to share the debates around attributing the letters to Timothy to Paul. A brief discussion of epistolary practice in the early church might be useful and help inquisitive minds not be unsettled by the revelation that maybe Paul didn't write these letters. Given the ready availability of biblical scholarship to anyone with a web browser, we preachers need to be aware of fact-checkers in the pews.

Yet the traditional view of Paul imprisoned and facing his inevitable death at the hands of the Roman regime, passing a torch on to his young protégé, Timothy, is a powerful tale. The human scale of this text is where the power lies. It need not be a major delay in the journey of the sermon to begin with a declaration, either of conviction in the traditional view or convenience in using the names as they are presented in the text, that can both acknowledge but then quickly set aside whatever concerns might arise about the origins of this letter.

We all need this blessing; we stand under this call as followers of Jesus Christ. The author challenges us to live a life of faith, especially as a leader or proclaimer or witness to that faith every day of our lives. Yes, this text would produce an appropriate ordination sermon, or it could be used at the commissioning of missionaries or ministers of various kinds, lay and clergy both. But it need not be limited to those occasions. Every act of worship in the life of the church is a call to service and an invitation to be a leader in kingdom-building as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Rekindle the gift" is the way the blessing is pronounced. The epistles are full of talk about gifts. Lists abound, hierarchies even of which gifts we ought to seek and which ones the church needs most. But this verse is not talking about those gifts – those individualized but community-supported gifts of the Spirit. Instead,

there is something more fundamental here, something deeper and more personal but also more universal. The mentor speaks of grace—the empowering presence of the Spirit and the redeeming love of Christ. It is that which we claim when we first say yes, when we first accept the embrace of Jesus through the arms of the church. Go back, is the advice, and remember who you were and who you are. Go back and look forward. Go back and remember that you’ve been loved from the beginning, whether you knew it or not.

Timothy knew it or should have. He was embraced by a mother and grandmother who lived a life of faith before him. This faith was passed on to him and now through him by a family. Timothy was blessed. Others might not have that blessing, yet Jesus is clear that relationships are available within the body of Christ. These are my brothers and sisters, he said, the ones who do the will of God (Matt. 12:49, et al).

This then becomes a part of the gift being rekindled, the relationships, the fellowship or community that surrounds us. Or if not a part of the gift, then the means by which we experience the gift, become aware of the gift, live into the gift. Paul, the mentor, says to hold fast to the relationships by which you came to faith, even when those relationships change. Because they do. Because they will.

Paul writes from prison. When he says, “Don’t be ashamed,” he means, “Don’t be ashamed of me.” Don’t be ashamed of what has happened to him, of where he has ended up. He isn’t ashamed of where the gospel has brought him. So, Timothy shouldn’t be ashamed either. But it isn’t just being ashamed of Paul that the mentor is concerned about. No, it is the gift itself, the call of the gospel. Don’t be ashamed of what happened to me as I lived this life of faith, and don’t be ashamed of the life of faith itself. The gospel isn’t what brought me here; it is the broken world in which we live—the same world we are giving our all to redeem, just as Christ gave his life to reconcile the world to himself.

Here’s the question the mentor is asking: “Can you trust in the presence of the God of faith even in the face of evidence to the contrary?” Actually, Paul doesn’t ask Timothy that question. Rather, he gives him the answer. Timothy is told how to proceed through a life that will have its struggles and suffering and still cling to the treasure, still claim the gift. And what he is told is that faith is found; Christ is found in relationships. He reminds Timothy of his mother and grandmother. Many

of us find strength in a difficult moment by calling to mind those who nurtured us in the faith. Even when they are no longer with us, they can be a source of comfort and empowerment when we remember what they gave to us. And not just family, there are those relationships of faith that become sustaining to us. He reminds Timothy of the tears that were shed at their parting, of the closeness that they shared. Yet here he is still supporting, still advising, still encouraging, even from a distance, even from a humbled circumstance like prison. Prison walls won't keep him from reaching out and mentoring his young friend. They are still connected in Christ.

The gift, then, is both the faith itself and the relationships in which the faith is found. Rekindle the gift, Timothy, call to mind your mentors in the faith, those who walked with you. Indeed, those who taught you how to walk. That is the spirit of power and love and self-discipline that can overcome any hesitancy, any reticence. So, embrace this life, Timothy, the glory and the suffering, embrace it all, knowing that you are not alone. The Spirit sustains; the community enlivens; the faith empowers; it is enough. Rekindle the gift.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Present Yourself to God

October 9, 2022 – [2 Timothy 2:8-15](#)

Color: Green

PLANNING NOTES

Does your worship often include a creed? This would be a week to include the creed. What are the statements of faith that speak most clearly to you as the worship planners? What creeds speak most profoundly in your congregation? If you are used to a familiar one, choose a different one this week and allow for time to reflect on the words. Perhaps the liturgist could introduce the creed or statement of faith with some words about why it was chosen and draw the congregation's attention to a few select statements—all with the purpose of giving them time to read before reciting. We live into our statements of faith. If a Sunday school class or confirmation group has written a creed, use that. Invite the congregation to consider writing their own statements of faith to share or to keep to themselves in order to focus their own journeys.

There are, of course, two dimensions to our text for this week. The inward and the outward might be one way to describe them. A statement of faith or a creed can represent the inward dimension. What is it that we believe? What is it that defines us as followers of Jesus Christ, as disciples?

But how do we represent the outward focus during worship? “Present yourself” is the call to live outwardly, *to live out loud*, as Steven Curtis Chapman said years ago. Is there a call to action you can promote? Is there a cause to join, a public witness to be made in your community? How can you call the worshipping congregation to present themselves as those approved by God, those guided by God?

Let our prayers look inward and outward at the same time. We pray for our own growth, our own healing, our own transformation. At the same time, we pray for a hurting and hungry world and for the will to reach beyond our walls in service and love. Let our songs sing of the Christ of faith, who sustains us with a powerful presence but also of the Jesus who ate with sinners and healed the sick, the one who went out approved by God.

PREACHING NOTES

There is a lot in this text on which to hang a sermon. But one can't help but be struck by all the "ifs" in these verses. Of course, it is true that "if" can be causal as well as conditional and that Paul, or the writer of this epistle, is not waffling here. There isn't a shred of uncertainty in these verses. And yet, a weighted phrase to be sure, and yet, there is something in this wording that gives us room to find ourselves, particularly when we look at the last verse of the text. But let's come back to that.

The mentor is rehearsing the faith, restating the gospel he proclaimed with his whole life, the one that brought him to his current status. It is presented as information for Timothy. "Remember Jesus Christ," he writes. Maybe it is self-sustaining in a way, a rehearsal of that faith that gives sustenance to endure all that is happening. Some argue that this is a creedal statement – Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David. It is the gospel in miniature, perhaps, a declaratory statement that encapsulates all of faith.

How would you sum up your faith or the foundational statements of that which gives your life meaning and direction? Maybe the suggestion here is that Timothy (and through him all of us) needed to find something that would hold him in difficult times. "All for Jesus, I surrender," perhaps. Or "Jesus who said I am always with you to the end of the age." The mentor has wrapped his whole life around this statement, this declaration of faith – no, this person who is with him in the hardship, with him in the chains. And in this relationship, in this person to whom he has invested his identity and reason for being, he knows freedom, even when condemned as a criminal.

Then the "ifs" come. But for the writer and for Paul (whether they are one in the same or not), the "ifs" have already happened. If we have died with him – check. If we endure – check again and again. If we deny him – wait, no not that, didn't do that. Therefore, we could read the opposite: if we don't deny him – check. If we are faithless – ah, now this one is tricky. Is there room for moments of doubt in Paul's theology? Certainly. Is there room for failures of will in Paul's confession of faith. Here it is. If we are faithless, Christ remains faithful. This carries the implied understanding that when faithlessness passes and faith is picked up again, Christ will continue to walk in faith with you.

We might ask whether the mentor is trying to shore up Timothy or give Timothy content for preaching. “Remind them of this,” we read, as if this is instruction for the preacher and for the teacher. And of course, it is. But that is quickly followed by “do your best to present yourself to God.” It’s a both/and situation here—as is most of the life of faith. It is both personal and communal, inspiration and exhortation.

But all these “ifs” become a way of describing a life. They are not a conditional approach to faith, but a causal relationship of how the mentor has found his life playing out. There is no waffling here. This is not “if, then, maybe.” This is what I have found; here is how my life has borne witness to the ongoing presence of Christ—the sustaining presence of Christ, even in the midst of hardship and trials.

It also, however, points to the investment of self in the discipleship path. We aren’t passive spectators waiting to be rescued from this broken world, subject to the winds of fate and the frailties of our own commitment. No, we are called to lean in, to grab hold. We are called to be unafraid of failure, to take risks in living out the call of our faith. Yes, we are being made disciples of Jesus Christ; it is not by our power but by the transforming work of the Spirit within us. Yet we partner with that Spirit, surrendering ourselves to that power at work within us. And then we partner with the Spirit in making disciples of others. And all of this disciple-making is not the end in itself. We are making disciples for the transformation of the world. “Do your best,” the mentor tells Timothy and us; do your best to present yourself to God.

Ah, so this is about being worthy. This is about encouraging God to choose us, to claim us. “No, not in the least,” says Paul—in many places. The claiming has been done; the being made worthy has been done. It was done on a cross on a hill called Calvary. It was done in a graveyard in the light of the risen sun on Easter morning. It was done. You are declared worthy. You are claimed by the creator, redeemed by the savior, sanctified by the sustainer.

Still, do your best. At what? If we’re already worthy, if we’re already claimed, what do we need to do our best at? At living the life. At letting the evidence of your salvation show in how you act, what you value, how you respond to everything that happens, for good and for ill. Do your best to let the light within you shine forth from you. Present yourself to God with the best that God has

placed within you. Present yourself to God by loving the ones God came to walk among. Present yourself to God by letting every word from your lips be words of praise and invitation. Present yourself to God with joy in every circumstance. Present yourself to God.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Itching Ears

October 16, 2022 – [2 Timothy 3:14-4:5](#)

Color: Green

PLANNING NOTES

This week is about distractions. Squirrel! Well, not about distractions so much as about loss of focus, or maybe even loss of trust in the foundations of the faith. Once again, we are called to celebrate our faith and to embrace ways of living out that faith that might grow and change but in the end will remain true to the words and witness of Jesus Christ.

One way of expressing this in worship might be to spend some time with the “why.” Why do we do what we do? What is behind the flow of worship, the elements of worship? A teaching time can refresh our appreciation for rituals and patterns, but also breathe new life into these things we have done and said since children in some cases. And for those unfamiliar with Christian worship, it can begin to demystify the event and elements.

So, what does it mean to sing praise to God or to lift up the name of Jesus? Why do we lose ourselves in music so that the Spirit might work into our minds and hearts and bodies? Why do we read from this ancient text week after week? How does this book written in a different context by different people over a long period of time have anything to say to us today and the world in which we live now? What is prayer, and how does corporate prayer differ from private, individual prayer? Creeds and sacraments, offerings and benedictions: what are all these things and why do we do them?

This could be done briefly during worship, but it might be an occasion for a class on worship. Maybe you could follow worship with a meal and workshop on the nature and meaning and historical practice of worship in the church. Or maybe there are written materials that could be handed out that would give some insight into why and how we worship. We can recommend a text the worship team of Discipleship Ministries produced that might be a starting place:

[https://store.umcdiscipleship.org/product/forming-disciples-through-worship.](https://store.umcdiscipleship.org/product/forming-disciples-through-worship)

The purpose behind attention to the “why” of worship is to maintain a focus. Distractions abound, and our text draws attention to an inclination to wander off in search of something new to interest a distracted mind or itching ears. Fresh

expressions and innovative forms of worship are wonderful and can help a congregation reclaim the “why” of worship. But novelty for the sake of novelty can sometimes obscure the “why” and not feed the soul or point toward the kingdom of God or elevate Christ. Grounding ourselves in what worship is about frees us for finding new ways and reinvigorating old ways of worshiping.

PREACHING NOTES

Be persistent. That’s a good reminder for this faith journey, for the path of discipleship. Again, not in order to earn our place; that’s not what this is about. You can’t overstate that truth. Too many of us feel as if we are still working our way in. Too many are still not grasping the fundamental outpouring of grace, that all our activity is in response to what has already been done. So, preacher, be persistent in telling that story, revealing that truth. Whether people are ready to listen or not, whether the time is favorable or unfavorable. Keep proclaiming, keep offering, keep pointing. Be persistent.

Easier said than done, to be sure. Who wouldn’t be willing to speak when everyone wants to listen? Who wouldn’t jump at the chance to teach willing listeners and eager followers ready to leap at the slightest suggestion of a new direction? But how often is that the case, preacher? How often are even the faithful congregants leaning forward to lap up the water of life that pours from the pulpit week after week? Not often enough, most likely.

The mentor talks about “itchy ears.” This has to come from experience, from looking in the eyes of the hearers and wondering whether anyone is home in there. It comes from fielding the calls to study this author or that preacher, to follow this trend or jump on that bandwagon, to grab hold of the fad for the day. It comes from what could become cynicism if you let it.

It's interesting what gets him there, to the itchy ears comment. He starts—and our text begins—with an ode to Bible reading. Do you remember falling in love with the Bible? Finding in this compilation of very human stories and fleeting divine presence to be as necessary to your life as the air that you breathe or the bread that you eat? The mentor remembers that and hopes that Timothy has fallen under the same allure. Reading the Bible isn’t a solitary activity, we’re told

here. It is a matter of passing on, of sharing wisdom and experience. When we study the Bible, we ask what the church has made of these words before. That's what tradition means in our quadrilateral formula: the traditional teaching and understanding of the doctrines and texts of our faith.

The mentor says to hold on to what you were taught, not just the content but also the spirit, the mentorship, the passing on of wisdom and call to living. He says to embrace the totality of the scriptures, even the parts you wrestle with, the parts that confuse you. Don't just hold on to that which agrees with your current preference and inclination. Keep reading, be challenged, be stretched, be troubled by this word. And keep asking this question: how does this text help me know Jesus better? How is the Word made flesh revealed in this written word? Because the more you know this Jesus, the more you can preach this gospel.

But this text isn't just for preachers. It is for all of us, any of us. All of us are charged with sharing our most precious relationship. All of us are called to reveal that which defines us, the one who shapes us. All of us are called to tell our story in ways that issue invitations and gather up those who have been left out. And the mentor tells us that it isn't always going to work. There aren't always going to be responses that let us know we're on the right track.

Jesus told us this; it isn't new. Remember the sower who went out to sow? And some of the seed and some of the seed and some of the seed? (Matthew 13, if you need a reminder.) In that story, three times out of four, it seems like a wasted effort. Stat that! On second thought, don't stat that. Instead, keep casting the seed. Keep proclaiming the word. It is needed. Ears are itching.

That's good news, the itching ears thing. It doesn't seem like it, that's true. It seems like an explanation for failure. Because of those itching ears, the mentor seems to be saying, folks will buy into the wildest stuff. Conspiracy theories abound because of inner ear restlessness. Idols are made by those trying to scratch deep in the auditory canal. So, it sounds like bad news.

Underneath, however, it is good news. It means that there is a great need for and a desire for a new story. A better story. A transformative story. A story like the story of Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom. (2 Timothy 4:1).

This is the opportunity before the preacher today and before the congregation every day: to tell a better story. Tell a story that works, a story that gives shape to a life of joy and hope, even in the midst of heartache and suffering. Ears are itching to hear and believe that story. So, how shall we tell it?

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – Poured Out

October 23, 2022 – [2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18](#)

Color: Green

PLANNING NOTES

We conclude this worship series completely out of breath—or we ought to anyway. This week, we’re about giving our all. About living full out, about being alive the way Jesus describes living. “I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly” (*John 10:10 NRSV*). This is what the life of faith offers; this is the example that Paul presents with his full-out life, embracing all that came to him, the good and the bad.

This is not to say that we present a life that ends up in jail. For most of us, that isn’t really the result of living a full-bore life of faith, although there are those who invite us to get into “good trouble.” The abundant life brings change, challenges status quo, works for justice and equality, threatens power and privilege. The life poured out in service draws attention, and the attention is not always positive.

Yet, that is the invitation in this witness from 2 Timothy. This might be an occasion to call upon a missionary you support. Find a way to get a witness from her or him to describe this life of pouring oneself out in service. Or maybe there is someone within the congregation who has given himself or herself to a cause or a vocation. Give people space to speak of their call, their decision to live this life, to follow this path. Not to say, “Do what I’ve done.” But to ask, “What will you give your life to?”

Listen to the hymns we sing and what is being asked of us, or what we are agreeing to when we sing. There is a high calling in *the United Methodist Hymnal*, one that we might think about before singing again. “Take my silver and my gold, not a **mite** would I withhold” (*United Methodist Hymnal*, 399) Wow.

Think about our prayers and what we ask God to do in us and through us. Think especially about the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan tradition that we sometimes use at the beginning of the year. “I am no longer my own but yours.” Amazing. “Put me to doing, put me to suffering.” We pray that.

We also need to lean into the benediction in our text. This life that just might wear us out, would wear us out if we tried to do it on our own, but it comes with

a promise. “But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength” (2 Timothy 4:17 NRSV). We who are called to give everything find that there is more of everything than we knew, because of the one who stood by us. We are sent with a challenge, but more powerfully, we are sent with a promise.

PREACHING NOTES

“As for me.” Why do we need this? It is almost embarrassingly personal, a private message between the mentor and protégé, and we seem like voyeurs listening in. Maybe we should just draw the curtain closed around the hospital bed and let them have their chat while we tend to other things.

Except that here, as in all things, there is a lesson to be learned. A life to consider, perhaps to model. We listen in and hear a challenge to the kind of life that gospel requires. Requires? Demands? That doesn’t seem right. The kind of life that the gospel affords or invites. A door is opened into this kind of life, this all-or-nothing life. And the one who opens the door stands with you to the very end. But perhaps we’re getting ahead of ourselves here. Let’s look at this life, this poured-out life.

The description is poured out as a libation. Libation is not a word we encounter all that often. The Greek is σπένδομαι, (*stendomai*), and sometimes it means *to be put to death, to have one’s life’s blood poured out*. It means to give one’s all, withholding nothing. A libation is a liquid sacrifice as opposed to a grain sacrifice or meat sacrifice. It would not be a misuse to speak of blood, sweat, and tears as part of the offering. We talk about that total commitment calling forth our vital essence, our full selves.

It is not, however, implied that the only way to be poured as a libation is to die, that only the martyrs can be said to have been poured out. We can, instead, read this as a call to live, not to die. Not to diminish those who die for the faith. Even in our so-called civilized world today, there are those who do make this ultimate sacrifice with frightening regularity. But we need not issue the call to die from our pulpits week by week. Instead, we issue the call to live. But to live fully.

The mentor describes the life as one of fighting the good fight, of running the race. Choose your metaphor. The image of fighting might be uncomfortable for

some in such a contentious time. But we fight for air; we fight for rights. There are fights that carry all sorts of connotations; it is important to choose what communicates best. The verse says, “the good fight,” which brings to mind the late Congressman John Lewis’s call for us to get into good trouble—trouble for the right purposes, trouble to bring about the right change. Fighting for the sake of fighting or to prove strength or toughness is not a good fight. But the fight for justice, for redemption, for transformation, might be.

Or maybe just keeping the faith would be the place to settle for this moment. What does it mean to keep the faith? Keep it to oneself? Keep it hidden away and safe and secure from all alarms? Keep it unchallenged, unexamined, tucked into some rarely visited corner of our existence? Surely not. No, the call is to keep the faith before us always. To let faith, to let Jesus, be the measure by which our lives are measured. We keep the faith when we live it every day. We keep the faith when we don’t set it aside when the choices get difficult. We keep the faith when challenged by divisiveness or hatred and prejudice, we don’t set it aside to go along and get along. We risk security and privilege by keeping the faith.

We keep the faith by listening to and leaning into the words of Jesus, by looking at his life as the model for our own. We keep the faith even when others seem to be swayed by something less than the faith of Jesus, something that resembles the faith of nation or race or moment. Paul, facing the end of his life, declares that he has kept the faith. We, facing another day of living and choosing and leading, declare the same.

The second set of verses, then, leans toward the author of that faith—the doorkeeper who invites us into a new way of living in the world. “The Lord stood by me,” the verse declares, even when no one else would or did. The Lord was the source of my strength, the source of my proclamation, the power to risk moving beyond the safe boundaries into a wider world with this hope and promise. There was a new sense of safety and a new understanding of security because of the one who stood beside.

“I was rescued from the lion’s mouth.” But wait, was he? What does rescued mean for Paul? How does the writer understand this concept? It obviously doesn’t mean avoidance of suffering, a lack of hardship. Here is where we wrestle with this idea of rescuing. We want the message to be one of safety, a lack of pain or

suffering. But that isn't the promise. That isn't the rescue. Instead, the rescue is inclusion in the kin-dom of God. The rescue is a relationship that never wavers, a presence that is real and felt and claimed. The rescue is an identity that is found in living poured out as a libation. We find who we are as we give ourselves away. We hold on to our true essence when we spend ourselves in the cause of Christ. We are poured out, so that glory is given to the one for whom we pour. And there we find the joy in living fully.