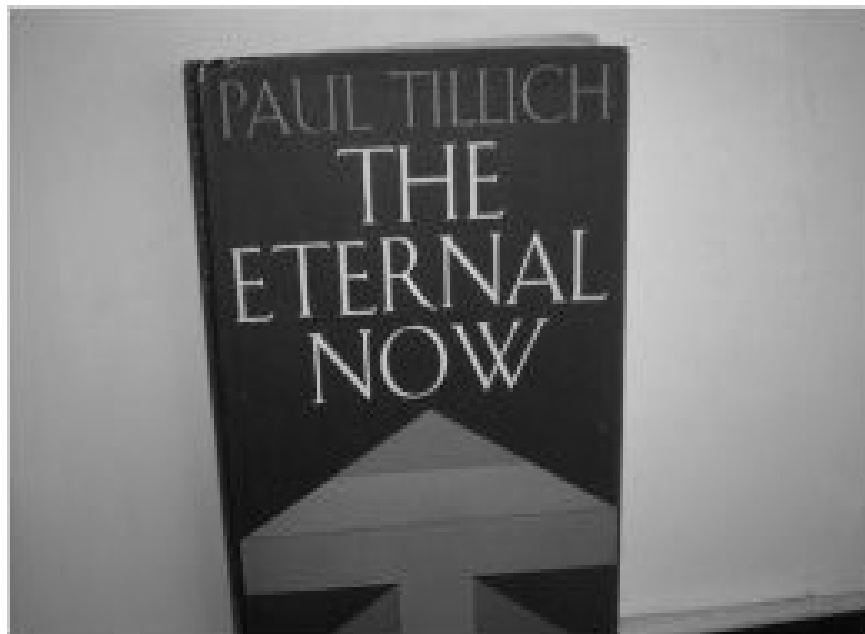


WELCOME TO...
The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
October 18, 2015

THE ETERNAL NOW



A thought to begin 2 Peter 3:8 says, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” C.S. Lewis says, “If you picture Time as a straight line along which we have to travel, then you must picture God as the whole page on which the line is drawn.” So while you live in the present and have the ability to remember the past and anticipate the future, God stands back and sees all three aspects of time at once. God saw the beginning, middle, and end of your life before the world began. Ephesians 1:4 says, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

Opening Prayer: *A Cry for Mercy*, Henri J.M. Nouwen:

I call to you, O Lord, from my quiet darkness. Show me your mercy and love. Let me see your face, hear your voice, touch the hem of your cloak. I want to love you, be with you, speak to you and simply stand in your presence. But I cannot make it happen. Pressing my eyes against my hands is not praying, and reading about your presence is not living it. But there is that moment in which you will come to me, as you did to your fearful disciples, and say, “Do not be afraid, it is I.” Let that moment come soon, O Lord. And if you want to delay it, then make me patient. Amen.

Hymn: Blest be the everlasting God

454

Scripture John 8: ⁵¹Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.’ ⁵²The Jews said to him, ‘Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, “Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.”’ ⁵³Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?’ ⁵⁴Jesus answered, ‘If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, “He is our God”,’ ⁵⁵though you do not know him. But I know him; if I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. ⁵⁶Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.’ ⁵⁷Then the Jews said to him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’ ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.’

From: The Eternal Now *"We have been created able to contemplate our end... both a blessing and a curse. So the real question is: 'How do we react if we become aware of the inescapable end contained in our future?' Are we able to bear it, to take its anxiety into a courage that faces ultimate darkness? Or are we thrown into utter hopelessness? Do we hope against hope, or do we repress our awareness of the end because we cannot stand it? Repressing the consciousness of our end expresses itself in several ways. It's for such a time as this we have words of wisdom, words of eternal life which whisper in our ear: 'Let not your hearts be troubled...' Many try to remove any immediate contemplation with thoughts of a long life between now and the end. For them it is decisive that the end be delayed. Even old people who are near the end do this, for they cannot endure the fact that the end will not be delayed much longer."*

"...We go towards something that is not yet, and we come from something that is no more. We are what we are by what we came from. We have a beginning as we have an end. There was a time that was not our time. We hear of it from those who are older than we; we read about it in history books; we try to envision the unimaginable billions of years in which neither we nor anyone was who could tell us of them. It is hard for us to imagine our "being-no more." It is equally difficult to imagine our "being-not-yet." But we usually don't care about our not yet being, about the indefinite time before our birth in which we were not. We think: now we are; this is our time -- and we do not want to lose it. We are not concerned about what lies before our beginning. We ask about life after death, yet seldom do we ask about our being before birth. But is it possible to do one without the other? The fourth gospel does not think so. When it speaks of the eternity of the Christ, it does not only point to his return to eternity, but also to his coming from eternity. "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." He comes from another dimension than that in which the past lies. Those to whom he speaks misunderstand him because they think of the historical past. They believe that he makes himself hundreds of years old and they rightly take offense at this absurdity. Yet he does not say, "I was" before Abraham; but he says, "I am" before Abraham was. He speaks of his beginning out of eternity. And this is the beginning of everything that is -- not the uncounted billions of years -- but the eternal as the ultimate point in our past.

Hymn: Day by Day

455

Hymn: Be present at our Table, Lord

456

Invitation to the Table: *Brothers and sisters, the table that is set is set for all; around it there are no divisions. As bread is not made from one grain, but from many, and as wine is made from many grapes, so too did Christ desire us to belong to him. This is a sacrament of unity; come all of you; taste and see that the Lord is good.*

Hymn: Here is bread, here is wine (1) 546

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord is here. God's spirit is with us. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise. For us you were born, for us you healed, preached, taught and showed the way to heaven; for us you were crucified, and for us, after death, you rose again. Lord Jesus Christ, present with us now, for all that you have done and all that you have promised, we praise you and give you honour and glory! Send down your Holy Spirit on us and on this bread and cup, that through you we may be healed, forgiven, and made whole, and that for you we may be your body, united together, loving and caring in the world until you kingdom comes. United in our love for you and one another, we join together in the prayer that you taught your friends, saying: Our Father...*

(adapted from A Wee Worship Book, p. 99)

Hymn: Here is bread, here is wine (2) 546

Communion

Prayer following communion: *You have nourished us in this meal and fed our bodies and souls. We have heard your love, send us out to speak it. We have seen your love, send us out to show it. We have been fed on your love; send us out to share. And let all things be done for your glory.*

Hymn: Go now in Peace

622

Commissioning: *Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life. We are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life. We are sent forth into this world to live into the visions God has laid on our hearts. We are now commissioned to: feed as we have been fed, forgive as we have been forgiven, love as we have been loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.*