

Grace Killian: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Grace Killian: Our responsive reading this morning is Psalm 31 in your black Appleton Psalter. Please stand. In Thee, Oh Lord, do I put my trust. Let me never be ashamed. Deliver me in Thy righteousness.

Congregation: Bow down Thine ear to me. Deliver me speedily. Be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me.

Grace Killian: For Thou are my rock and my fortress. Therefore, for Thy name's sake, lead me and guide me.

Congregation: Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me, for Thou art my strength.

Grace Killian: Into Thine hand I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, oh Lord God of truth.

Congregation: I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy, for Thou hast considered my trouble. Thou hast known my soul in adversities.

Grace Killian: And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. Thou has set my feet in a large room.

Congregation: For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. Nevertheless, Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee.

Grace Killian: Oh, love the Lord, all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Congregation: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Choir: (singing)

Aidan Stoddart: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Aidan Stoddart: So in his first letter to the early church in Corinth, Saint Paul commands his readers, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." Everything. Now, this commandment may have been written in a particular evangelistic circumstance, but I think its universality transcends its immediate context, so there's something for us here if we know how to accept

it. This imperative is just as much for modern Christians as it is for those long dead Corinthians. Indeed, if we are to live a Gospel way of life, I think it does entail doing everything for God's glory.

Aidan Stoddart: But how is that possible? The task is absurd if we take it literally. Everything for God's glory? Going to church or doing charity work for God's glory makes sense, but what about all of those agonizingly mundane things we do? Shall I sit in traffic for the glory of God or fold my clothes for the glory of God or chug espresso five minutes before a quiz for the glory of God? Doing everything for God's glory just seems like an impossible standard when the things we do are not particularly glorious, and yet Paul's imperative still stands, and I believe it springs from truth.

Aidan Stoddart: We may indeed live and move and breathe at all times for God's glory, though fulfilling the commandment may involve changing our understanding of what that glory entails. We tell ourselves that participating in the glory of God is a matter of doing all those pious things that make us holy, but if we're to let the glory of God permeate our every movement and action, perhaps we need to stop limiting our notion of glory and holiness to a finite list of good and righteous deeds. Holiness and glory run far deeper than any particular thing we do.

Aidan Stoddart: I want to invite you to consider holiness as conceived by the great mystic Meister Eckhart in order that we might come to a new understanding of today's commandment. Eckhart writes, "People ought never to think too much about what they could do, but they ought to think about what they could be. We ought not to think of building holiness upon action. We ought to build it upon a way of being, for it is not what we do that makes us holy, but we ought to make holy what we do. However holy the works may be, they do not as works make us at all holy, but as we are holy and have being to that extent, we make all our works holy." Meister Eckhart grounds holiness not in action, but in being. He teaches that is our being which connects our actions to God's glory, and our being is nothing less than the truth of incarnation taught by holy Scripture, that as the book of wisdom proclaims, God's immortal spirit dwells within all things, and as the letter to the Colossians proclaims, "There is a glory of the mystery which is Christ in us."

Aidan Stoddart: The core proclamation of Christianity is that God loves us enough to live in us. When we live in awareness of this and orient our hearts in thanksgiving to this, we'll find that everything we do is a dance, an intimate step with God and for God's glory. Not because of what we do, but because of who we are. Filled with a God who created us, sustains us, and will never let us go and we don't have to do anything for this to be true.

Aidan Stoddart: It's a gift. It's freely given. God's glory isn't waiting for us on the other side of some holy deed, and God certainly is not waiting for us to do the right thing in order to love us and dwell within us. The good news of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel,

God with us, is that God can and God will come in glory and in holiness to inhabit even me. Even you. Even now. May God give us eyes to perceive this divine indwelling so that whether we eat or drink, and indeed whatever we do, it will spring from our God-filled being and be for God's glory. Not because of what we do, but because of who we are. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Grace Killian: Let us join together in the Lord's Prayer.

Grace Killian: Our Father, who are in Heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this daily our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Grace Killian: Now please stand and join in our hymn this morning, hymn number 198, The Lord Is My Shepherd.

Congregation: (singing)

Grace Killian: Now may the piece of the Lord with you wherever He may send you, and may He bring your home rejoicing once again into our doors. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.