Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

July 21, 2019

**“The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark”**

**I. William Shakespeare (1564-1616)**

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon about 100 miles northwest of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1564. William's father was a successful leather merchant who once held the public position of alderman. He was the third of six children including two older sisters and three younger brothers. He went to the local grammar school where he learned about poetry, history, \_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. When William turned eighteen he married Anne Hathaway (she was \_ years older). They had a daughter named Susanna and twins named Hamnet and Judith. Eventually he ended up in London and worked at the theatre, where he was part of an acting company called Lord Chamberlain's Men. Shakespeare wrote plays for the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He worked as an \_\_\_\_\_ as well. His plays became very popular in London and soon the Lord Chamberlain's Men were one of the most popular acting companies in the city. Some of Shakespeare's early plays include The Taming of the Shrew, Richard III, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and A Midsummer Night's Dream.  While Lord Chamberlain's Men owned the Theatre, the land was owned by Giles Allen. Several members of the company dismantled the Theatre and moved the timber across the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to another spot. There they built a new theatre called the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It could house up to 3,000 spectators and had a uniquely designed stage with a painted ceiling, columns, and stage wall. Many of Shakespeare's greatest plays were written in the last half of his career. These included Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. His success in the theatre, as well as his investments in land and the Globe, made Shakespeare a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ man. He purchased a large home in Stratford for his family called New Place. Shakespeare also became famous for his poetry. His most famous poem of the time was Venus and Adonis. A book of 154 of Shakespeare's sonnets was published in 1609. William retired to his home in Stratford and died on his 52nd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  He is credited with introducing nearly \_\_\_\_\_\_ words to the English language. In addition, his works are the second most often quoted after the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He wrote 37 plays in his lifetime averaging about 1.5 plays per year he was writing. His plays were performed for both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and King James I.

**II. The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark Summary**

On a dark winter night, a \_\_\_\_\_ walks the ramparts of Elsinore Castle in Denmark. Discovered first by a pair of watchmen, then by the scholar Horatio, the ghost resembles the recently deceased \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, whose brother Claudius has inherited the throne and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the king’s widow, Queen Gertrude. When Horatio and the watchmen bring Prince Hamlet, the son of Gertrude and the dead king, to see the ghost, it speaks to him, declaring ominously that it is indeed his father’s spirit, and that he was murdered by none other than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Ordering Hamlet to seek \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the man who usurped his throne and married his wife, the ghost disappears with the dawn. Prince Hamlet devotes himself to avenging his father’s death, but, because he is contemplative and thoughtful by nature, he \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, entering into a deep melancholy and even apparent madness. Claudius and Gertrude worry about the prince’s erratic behavior and attempt to discover its cause. They employ a pair of Hamlet’s friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to watch him. When Polonius, the pompous Lord Chamberlain, suggests that Hamlet may be mad with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for his daughter, Ophelia, Claudius agrees to spy on Hamlet in conversation with the girl. But though Hamlet certainly seems mad, he does not seem to love Ophelia: he orders her to enter a nunnery and declares that he wishes to \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A group of traveling actors comes to Elsinore, and Hamlet seizes upon an idea to \_\_\_\_\_ his uncle’s guilt. He will have the players perform a scene closely resembling the sequence by which Hamlet imagines his uncle to have murdered his father, so that if Claudius is guilty, he will surely react. When the moment of the murder arrives in the theater, Claudius \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the room. Hamlet and Horatio agree that this proves his guilt. Hamlet goes to kill Claudius but finds him \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Since he believes that killing Claudius while in prayer would send Claudius’s soul \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Hamlet considers that it would be an inadequate revenge and decides to wait. Claudius, now frightened of Hamlet’s madness and fearing for his own safety, orders that Hamlet be sent to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at once. Hamlet goes to confront his mother, in whose bedchamber Polonius has hidden behind a tapestry. Hearing a noise from behind the tapestry, Hamlet believes the king is hiding there. He draws his sword and stabs through the fabric, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Polonius. For this crime, he is immediately dispatched to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. However, Claudius’s plan for Hamlet includes more than banishment, as he has given Rosencrantz and Guildenstern sealed orders for the King of England demanding that Hamlet be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In the aftermath of her father’s death, Ophelia goes mad with grief and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the river. Polonius’s son, Laertes, who has been staying in France, returns to Denmark in a rage. Claudius convinces him that Hamlet is to blame for his father’s and sister’s deaths. When Horatio and the king receive letters from Hamlet indicating that the prince has returned to Denmark after pirates attacked his ship in route to England, Claudius concocts a plan to use Laertes’ desire for revenge to secure Hamlet’s death. Laertes will fence with Hamlet in innocent sport, but Claudius will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Laertes’ blade so that if he draws blood, Hamlet will die. As a backup plan, the king decides to poison a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which he will give Hamlet to drink should Hamlet score the first or second hits of the match. Hamlet returns to the vicinity of Elsinore just as Ophelia’s funeral is taking place. Stricken with grief, he attacks Laertes and declares that he had in fact always \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ophelia. Back at the castle, he tells Horatio that he believes one must be prepared to die, since death can come at any moment. A foolish courtier named Osric arrives on Claudius’s orders to arrange the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes. The sword-fighting begins. Hamlet scores the first hit, but declines to drink from the king’s proffered goblet. Instead, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ takes a drink from it and is swiftly killed by the poison. Laertes succeeds in wounding Hamlet, though Hamlet does not die of the poison immediately. First, Laertes is cut by his own sword’s blade, and, after revealing to Hamlet that Claudius is responsible for the queen’s death, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the blade’s poison. Hamlet then stabs Claudius through with the poisoned sword and forces him to drink down the rest of the poisoned wine. Claudius dies, and Hamlet dies immediately after achieving his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. At this moment, a Norwegian prince named Fortinbras, who has led an army to Denmark and attacked Poland earlier in the play, enters with ambassadors from England, who report that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are \_\_\_\_\_. Fortinbras is stunned by the gruesome sight of the entire royal family lying sprawled on the floor dead. He moves to take power of the kingdom. Horatio, fulfilling Hamlet’s last request, tells him Hamlet’s tragic story. Fortinbras orders that Hamlet be carried away in a manner befitting a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**III. Hamlet**

Hamlet is a mysterious character, that actually tells other characters that there is more to him than meets the eye. He is particularly drawn to difficult questions or questions that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be answered with any certainty. Hamlet becomes obsessed with proving his uncle’s guilt before trying to act. The standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt” is simply \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to him. Even though he is thoughtful to the point of obsession, Hamlet also behaves rashly and impulsively. When he does act, it is with surprising swiftness and little or no premeditation, as when he stabs Polonius through a curtain without even checking to see who he is. He seems to step very easily into the role of a madman, behaving erratically and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the other characters with his wild speech and pointed innuendos. It is also important to note that Hamlet is extremely melancholy and discontented with the state of affairs in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and in his own family—indeed, in the world at large. He is disappointed with his mother for marrying his uncle so quickly, and he repudiates Ophelia, a woman he once claimed to love, in the harshest terms. His words often indicate his disgust with and distrust of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in general. Gertrude’s character seems to raise many questions, including: Was she involved with Claudius before the death of her husband? Did she love her husband? Did she know about Claudius’s plan to commit the murder? Did she love Claudius, or did she marry him simply to keep her high status in Denmark? Does she believe Hamlet when he insists that he is not mad, or does she pretend to believe him simply to protect herself? Does she intentionally betray Hamlet to Claudius, or does she believe that she is protecting her son’s secret? The Gertrude who does emerge clearly in Hamlet is a woman defined by her desire for status and affection, as well as by her tendency to use \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill her instinct for self-preservation—which, makes her extremely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ upon the men in her life. She is at her best in social situations when her natural grace and charm seem to indicate a rich, rounded personality. At times it seems that her grace and charm are her only characteristics, and her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on men appears to be her sole way of capitalizing on her abilities.

**IV. Main Themes of The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark**

1. Revenge

2. After-life

3. Impact of Sin and Lack of Redemption

**7/28 “The Brothers Karamazov”**