

Worship on June 7, 2020

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Announcements:

. This worship is for Sunday, June 7, 2020. God may continue to fill your life with safety and health. May God fill this worship with his grace and love.

. Curbside meeting – we will meet and chat outside our church building in the bench area near the side doors. If we can arrange the time between 12-2 on Tuesdays and Fridays, we will meet in person. Please wear facemask and let us try to keep the safe distance. To meet me, please email me or phone me to make the appointment. revsoonghuh@hotmail.com / 647-208-5381. If it's too hot in the midday, let me know, then we can change the time.

. Thank you for the offerings dropped off at the office door and through Pre-Authorized Remittance. (PAR) – and you can check out website to start giving to the LORD.

. How are you worshipping online materials? I hope the presence of the Lord be with you every time you seek His face. For me, I decided to do the sermon series because it is good for all time. The Armour of God, especially, is good for the time of hardship like this. Yet, the weakness of the series sermon is that we are not really connecting to each other. Yes, I sometimes call to few people to check out how you are doing. But, I only had two regular services before Pandemic and from the 3rd Sunday, we had to close our church building for public worship gatherings. Since then, few are passed away, few are hospitalized, and few important issues are raised. Although we cannot have the close connection, we will share some common ground of our feelings and experiences

about living in this time. So, today's message is about **The Hope for Eternity**. May God speak to your hearts through this message today.

Let us worship God with singing!

SONG –592 – I the LORD of Sea and Sky

Prayer for worship

Heavenly Father, we are coming before your presence confessing your Lordship. Be the leader of this worship and be the head of our church. We are going to talk about the Hope you placed in us. As we worship you, let the true hope for you be activated in our hearts. Let us awake for our hope you have prepared for us and placed in us. As we listen to your words, open our hearts and eyes. Holy Spirit, teach us what you have in your heart. Let us be connected to you and be like you as we continue our faith journey. We long to be with you. Be with us and guide us. Use this time of worship and fill this hour with you. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.

Title: The Hope for Eternity

I am new. I was ordained and inducted on February 23, 2020. So, it's been only 3 months since I became the pastor here, at St. Andrew's Aurora. We had two regular Sunday services and then from my third Sunday, we weren't able to gather together in person because of the

coronavirus. From March 22 to now, we are worshipping alone through this online video and some other channels. How are you doing? Anyone misses seeing each other? Anyone misses the passing of the peace on Sunday morning? Anyone waits for the coffee time after the worship? I do! I do miss in-person worship. I miss the energy when we are worshipping God together. I miss the opportunity of getting to know you. We are missing our Sunday church experience for three full months now.

What was your focus when you come to church and meet each other and worship God? For me, the most important foundational value about church is the cross. There are two axis on the cross. Vertically, it's the relationship with God; and horizontally, it's the relationship with each other. So, up and down connection with God and side to side connections with others matter to me. So far, I preached to you with the series sermon called, "The Armour of God." I love this sermon series and it's appropriate for this time of hardship. However, I am missing side to side connection these days. What I mean is that, video worship is one-way communication, not two ways. When preaching at the pulpit, it seems one-way communication, but in fact, it's two ways. Yes, I am the only one talking, but there's energy we are building together. Sometimes, I can sense that the hearts of the people who are listening to my sermon are focusing on God and dancing because of the grace of the Lord for them. No one talks but I do, yet, I feel the joy that fills the space we are worshipping. On the other hand, sometimes, I sense the opposite. They just want to go for their lunch. Their bodies are here, but their thoughts are eating cheese burgers already. This is togetherness and connectedness. And I miss it so much.

During this time of Pandemic, we lost few people from our congregation. Since this video is accessible to everyone, I won't say any names and won't reveal any personal information. But, sisters and brothers at St. Andrew's, we are told about the people who are lost. We hoped to be there with the family, but we couldn't visit. We wished to embrace them in our arms, but it was not SAFE to hug others, not even handshakes. We only talked on the phones or texted or emailed. Short after the declaration of the pandemic, one video was viral on YouTube. It was about a dying father in the hospital, but the family could not visit. So, they were present in the last moment of their father through Facetime. The nurses were crying, family members were crying, and the news reporter was crying too. And when I watched, I was crying too. It happened in the United States and I thought it was faraway. However, that story happened to us as well.

Because the family members of the patients had to exercise the self-isolation, they had to facetime to experience their connectedness. What an awful time we are experiencing now.

1 Thessalonians was written by Paul. One of my commentaries states this: "First Thessalonians was written to commend and encourage the Thessalonian believers, who were enduring persecution, and to offer consolation concerning their loved ones who had died in Christ." It is giving us the Hope for Eternity with Christ and the loved ones. This is today's text in NLT (New Living Translation).

13 And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. 15 We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. 17 Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. 18 So encourage each other with these words.

Paul is teaching the believers what will happen to the believers who died first and the believers still living, like us. The city of Thessalonica was the prominent seaport and the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. This city was very prosperous. And it was located near the Mount Olympus, legendary home of the Greek pantheon. So, the citizens accepted the Greek paganism from their birth. In this cultural and religious background, the believers were persecuted. Therefore, they longed for the Eternity with God. In this background, believers died and remaining believers questioned what will happen to their loved ones and to themselves.

The Message – 13-14 And regarding the question, friends, that has come up about what happens to those already dead and buried, we don't want you in the dark any longer. First off, you must not carry on over them like people who have nothing to look forward to, as if the grave were the last word. Since Jesus died and broke loose from the grave, God will most certainly bring back to life those who died in Jesus. 15-18 And then this: We can tell you with complete confidence—we have the Master's word on it—that when the Master comes again to get us, those of us who are still alive will not get a jump on the dead and leave them behind. In actual fact, they'll be ahead of us. The Master himself will give the command. Archangel thunder! God's trumpet blast! He'll come down from heaven and the dead in Christ will rise—they'll go first. Then the rest of us who are still alive at the time will be caught up with them into the clouds to meet the Master. Oh, we'll be walking on air! And then there will be one huge family reunion with the Master. So reassure one another with these words.

Have hope for eternity. Jesus Christ our LORD will come back for us.

So, what do we have left? We have the Hope for Eternity. Good. Now what? How do we use our lives? In this COVID 19, social distancing is our new norm. However, there are thousands of people gathering for the Black Right. George Floyd was dead. In the process of arrest, an officer pressed his neck with his knee. Mr. Floyd cried out that he was not able to breathe. He was not moving, so he was moved to the hospital, but he did not make it. Initially, he went to a grocery shop to buy a pack of cigarette. The cashier suspected that he used a fake money. The clerk followed the protocol calling the police. When I worked at store, I saw fake money. And when receiving the change, I think I had the fake money as well. It looked suspicious. But, I used it, just like George Floyd. I am not saying that using fake money is okay. But, knowing or not-knowing, it could happen. Fake money is not very rare. Justice? Righteousness? Truth? Faith? I always talk about them. But, if it's not in my life, what's the use of knowing about them? Paul ends today's message with this. "Encourage one another with these words." "Reassure one another with the Hope for Eternity." We mourn for our loved ones when we lose them. How would we treat our loved ones? Do we need justice? Do we need instructions? Do we need righteousness when loving our loved ones? Last week, we had the first session meeting. As we began the session meeting, I shared this word from Romans.

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (NRSV)

"Be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying" (CEB)

"Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy, share tears when they're down." (MSG)

Some say the police officer who choked George Floyd was a bad apple. They say every group has some bad apples. But, some jobs cannot have bad apples. Like the pilot, if the airplane crashed because the pilot was one of the bad apples. Will that be an excuse? We cannot have bad apples when loving our loved ones.

With the Hope for Eternity, just like we would treat our loved ones, we need to treat everyone. I will share a video clip about reality of our society. Let this video sink in our hearts and share the Hope for Eternity with the people around us.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5fbQ1-zps>

(If you want to watch this video, please search "Life of Privilege Explained in a \$100 race" from YouTube.com)

Let us pray.

Loving Father God, there are a lot of things happening in our lives. There are ups and downs. Sometimes we are happy, and other times, we weep. We experienced some loss of our loved ones. It's such a hard time. We are restricted of what we want to do because of the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Help us learn from Paul's words for us. Help us be assured what will happen to our life and death. The Lord Jesus Christ will come for us and will take us to the eternity. Fill our hearts with the Hope for Eternity and live with the hope. In our lives, we live like we don't have tomorrow. We become short sighted a lot. We know what's good, but we are greedy and we only think immediate benefits many times. Give us hope, the real hope. Fill our hearts with the real hope. We want to have the real hope for eternity, for heaven, for reunion with God and our loved ones before the presence of our Lord. We pray that once we have the hope in our hearts, help us live accordingly. There are fancy words. Justice, righteousness, human rights, black rights, sharing, anti-racism, spiritual... what's the use of them if we don't practice what we know. We are desperate for you. We are hopeless without you. Knowing these values are great, but we don't have the power to live with these. We confess our weakness, our selfishness. Heavenly Father, fill our hearts with your Hope, true hope. And change our lives with your power.

Prayer for the people.

We pray for the people who are protesting. Let them lay down their anger before you. They are shouting "enough is enough." They've been experiencing this for a long time, we all admit. Through this protest and acknowledgement of the need of anti-racism, help our society unite with each other and treat each other with respect and love like we treat our loved ones. Some are turning into riots. Help them be peaceful and let them be wise in speaking what they need to speak out. Let the whole world listen to this and change our thoughts and our actions. In this COVID 19 Pandemic, they stand up for their rights. Please protect them and please help them protect themselves wisely.

We pray for the coronavirus to end as soon as possible. To help this, pour out your wisdom and insight upon the leaders of the countries. Let them come before you with their knees. And help scientists and researchers when they are trying to develop the cure for the virus. There will be

deadly viruses in our future. Heavenly Father, we repent our ignorance of the nature. We were supposed to be good stewards of your creation, but we only took the advantage of them. Help us learn and help us start to take good care of our earth.

We pray for the people who lost their loved ones. Fill their hearts with your peace and encouragement. We learned today that there is Hope for Eternity. Fill our lives with the real hope and let this hope be in action in our lives.

We are also praying for the people who are ill. Jehovah Rapha. You are the God heals. Place your hands upon them and help them with your power.

This is the time of anxiety. Please remember the victims of Nova Scotia gunshot. Please remember the people who are in nursing homes. And please remember the frontline workers. Have mercy on them.

The world seems to be paused because of coronavirus. Help us be wise and help us use our lives to show your love and grace. We are weak, but you are strong. Hold our hands and be with us. We thank you for being our true hope. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Song – **All in all**

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions:

1. Believe and be encouraged by today's message about life and death. Christ will come to take good care of us.
2. With the Hope for Eternity, what can I do? If I truly live accordance of my hope, how will my life be changed?
3. When I come back to the in-person worship and gathering, how would I treat others? Will it be the same as before having the true hope for eternity?

