

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
October 25th, 2020
Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin

Welcome and Announcements

- **Passing of Germaine Vanderklok, a former member of St. Andrew's and a lady I used to visit in Lanark Lodge.**
- **Passing of Wayne Clapp, husband of Lester Dezan who is familiar to many of us at St. Andrew's and who attended worship here.**

Call to Worship (Isaiah 57:14-16)

And it shall be said,

**“Build up, build up, prepare the way,
 remove every obstruction from my people's way.”**

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,
 who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:

**“I dwell in the high and holy place,
 and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,
 to revive the spirit of the lowly,
 and to revive the heart of the contrite.**

For I will not contend forever,
 nor will I always be angry;

**for the spirit would grow faint before me,
 and the breath of life that I made.**

Prayer of Invocation

O God, you summon the day to dawn,
 you teach the morning to waken the earth.
 For you the valleys shall sing for joy,
 the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
 Before you the kings of the earth shall bow,
 the poor and the persecuted shall shout for joy.
 Your love and mercy shall last forever,
 fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise.
 Great is your name.
 Great is your love.
 May we worship you with hearts totally open
 to what you have to teach us.

Through Christ Jesus our Lord we pray. **Amen!**

Hymn: “**All Hail The Power of Jesus Name**” (Tune: Diadem)
(Click on the link below to listen to the hymn.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WVSyGBBfi8>

1. All hail the power of Jesus' name
Let angels prostrate fall
Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown----- Him
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him
And crown Him Lord of all

2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race
Ye ransomed of the fall
Ye ransomed of the fall
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown----- Him
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him
And crown Him Lord of all

3. Let every kindred, every tribe
On this terrestrial ball
On this terrestrial ball
To him all majesty ascribe
And crown----- Him
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him
And crown Him Lord of all

4. O that with yonder sacred throng
We at his feet may fall
We at his feet may fall
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown----- Him
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him
And crown Him Lord of all

Call to Confession

Jesus said that we are to love the Lord our God with all your heart,
soul, and mind' and we are to love our neighbor as our self.
As God has instructed us in these great commandments,
and because we have not lived in full obedience,
let us now confess our sins to God,
trusting Christ as our Savior and Lord.

Prayer of Confession (from Psalm 51)

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.**

You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

**Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

**Do not cast me from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.**

Lord, we cast ourselves on your mercy
and we pray this psalm in the mighty name of Jesus. **Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen**

Responsive Reading Psalm 99

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

The LORD is great in Zion;

He is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise your great and awesome name!

Holy is he!

The King in his might loves justice.

You have established equity;

you have executed justice

and righteousness in Jacob.

Exalt the LORD our God;

worship at his footstool!

Holy is he!

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,

Samuel also was among those who called upon his name.

They called to the LORD, and he answered them.

In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them;

they kept his testimonies

and the statute that he gave them.

O LORD our God, you answered them;

you were a forgiving God to them,

but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

Exalt the LORD our God,

and worship at his holy mountain;

for the LORD our God is holy!

Ministry of Music: "My Life is in Your Hands" The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AS6tQYJVO80>

1. You don't have to worry and don't you be afraid
Joy comes in the morning, troubles they don't last always
For there's a friend in Jesus, who will wipe your tears away
And if your heart is broken, just lift your hands and say:
"I know that I can make it
I know that I can stand
No matter what may come my way

My life is in your hands"

2. You don't have to worry and don't you be afraid
 Joy comes in the morning, troubles they don't last always
 For there's a friend in Jesus, who will wipe your tears away
 And if your heart is broken, just lift your hands and say:
 "I know that I can make it
 I know that I can stand
 No matter what may come my way
 My life is in your hands
 With Jesus I can take it
 With him I know I can stand
 No matter what may come my way
 My life is in your hands.

3. So, when your tests and trials
 They seem to get you down
 And all your friends and loved ones
 Are nowhere to be found
 Remember there's a friend named Jesus
 Who will wipe your tears away
 And if your heart is broken
 Just lift your hands and say

"I know that I can make it
 I know that I can stand
 No matter what may come my way
 My life is in your hands
 With Jesus I can take it
 With him I know I can stand
 No matter what may come my way
 My life is in your hands.

Ending

My life is in Your hands (3X)

Scripture Reading:

Philippians 1:18b-26

Yes, and I will rejoice, [19](#) for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20](#) as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. [21](#) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22](#) If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23](#) I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with

Christ, for that is far better. [24](#) But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25](#) Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26](#) so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

Lord God, we wish to see Jesus.

By your Spirit's power, give us eyes to see his glory.

Through Christ we pray. **Amen.** (Based on John 12:21)

“Confidence in Christ”

Philippians 1: 18b – 21

One of our core values at St. Andrew's that you may have noticed is the importance that is placed on prayer. Shortly after I assumed my duties here in 2017, Susan and I started to attend the Friday evening prayer group. It was and is not large, but every Friday night – maybe not the night of the week that you would choose for a regular prayer gathering – seven people meet to pray for the needs of this congregation and the people who are part of this congregation. Then in the fall of 2017, in the face of some very serious concerns about the health of some of our church members, we started what has become known as Prayers For The People By The People. We started praying for people in need right here in front of the congregation. Those prayers were not by the minister, but by you, the people of this congregation. This has taken a new format during COVID with Fabiola mailing out an updated list every week so that you can continue to prayer regularly for the people listed.

Why do we do this? It certainly wasn't accepted by everyone. Some were strongly opposed to it. Nevertheless, we persevered and continued to pray. Hopefully this passage that we are looking at today will help to answer the “why” question as well as speak to us about the source of our confidence as Christians.

Some people have the mistaken notion that once an individual becomes a Christian, troubles fall away. We have peace with God, conflicts with others cease and we receive all the desires of our hearts. If that doesn't happen, then we figure that either there must be some really big sin in our lives for which God is punishing us or we get angry at God. Nowhere do we find this mistaken understanding of the Christian life in the teaching of Jesus. In the Beatitudes, Matthew 5, he says: **10** **"Blessed are**

those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. This refers here to those who suffer, not because they have

done anything wrong, but because they have lived righteous lives for God. In Matthew 10 Jesus says to his disciples: **16** **"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.** Jesus never promised us an easy path.



I have heard it said that the greatest hindrances to following Jesus are our close friends and family – the people we love. It is because of our love for them and their insistence on doing what they think is right that we often make compromises. I read the story of a young Indian Christian who felt called to leave his home in the south of India to engage in missionary work in the north of India. He was the oldest son in the family and in that culture, it is

the custom that the eldest son, should anything happen to the parents, will look after the other children. It is also his responsibility to take care of the parents when they get old. When this young Christian told his family of his decision, they began to weep and cry: *“You cannot do that! Who will take care of us?”*

Finally, he had to make a decision: Was he going to follow the Lord’s calling and love Jesus more than he loved his own parents? So, he packed his little suitcase and early the next morning made his way quietly out of the house down to the bus station. He got on the bus that would take him to the train station where he would begin a journey that would take him 2,000 miles away from home. Before the bus driver could close the door to the bus, an older man jumped on and he was crying. It was his own father and he said to the bus driver: *“You cannot go! You cannot take my son! He cannot leave us!”* Minutes ticked by. Finally, the young missionary said to the bus driver: *“Sir, take my father out of the bus. I am not going to get off.”* As North Americans will not understand this, but by force they had to take the father out of the bus so the missionary could travel on. He was not happy about this. He did not travel on laughing and smiling. This young man went weeping and brokenhearted. How hard it is to follow Jesus.

Paul, who founded the church in Philippi and wrote the passage we are studying this morning, knew from personal experience how painful it can be to serve Christ. In Acts 14 we read about what happened to Paul in a place called Lystra: **19 But Jews having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.** Paul went wherever God called him to go. Everywhere he went he preached the gospel and everywhere he preached the gospel there was uproar. There was always a reaction to his preaching, usually not a good one. In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul writes of his missionary experience:

23 —with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger



from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers ...

To follow Christ was no picnic. It was not blessing after blessing and endless bliss. It was no Sunday afternoon romp in the park. Even as he writes this letter to the Philippians he is under arrest in the city of Rome, chained day and night to two members of the elite Praetorian Guard. And to make matters worse, some Christians were going out of their way because of envy, rivalry and selfish ambition to make life more difficult for Paul because of the way they preached the Gospel. However, Paul, who was committed to seeing the Gospel advance in every possible way, reacted by saying: **18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.**

Would we be able to respond like this if we found ourselves in similar circumstances? I have come to understand that Paul could say this because of the perspective he had gained on life. When things are not going well, we tend to:

1. Blame ourselves. (*"I must be a terrible person! I am such a loser!"*) or
2. We Blame God. (*"God doesn't care about me! It is not fair! God is punishing me!"*)

This idea persists that if you are right with God and not doing anything wrong – that is, if there are no big sins in your life – then everything will go well for you.

However, Paul's life and experience point in the opposite direction. Good Christian people still face difficult times. Bad things do happen to good people. Following Jesus means entering through a narrow gate, following a narrow path that is often hard and it is lonely, because there are not many travelers on that path. Paul says about the difficult experiences he is facing: **18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice ...** Now we will learn about his perspective on life and how that perspective can be maintained.

Paul chooses to live a life of rejoicing and thanksgiving. **Yes, and I will continue to rejoice ...** We think that we can only live a life of rejoicing if everything is going well for us. You may remember this piece from the musical "Oklahoma" which goes:

*"Oh, what a beautiful mornin',
Oh, what a beautiful day."*



*I've got a beautiful feeling,
Everything's going my way."*

That's Rodgers and Hammerstein's take on it. Joy and happiness result when everything is going our way. The trouble is that happiness is based on the happenings in our lives. If what is happening is good then we will feel happy. But if what is happening is bad then we will feel unhappy. The American Constitution holds



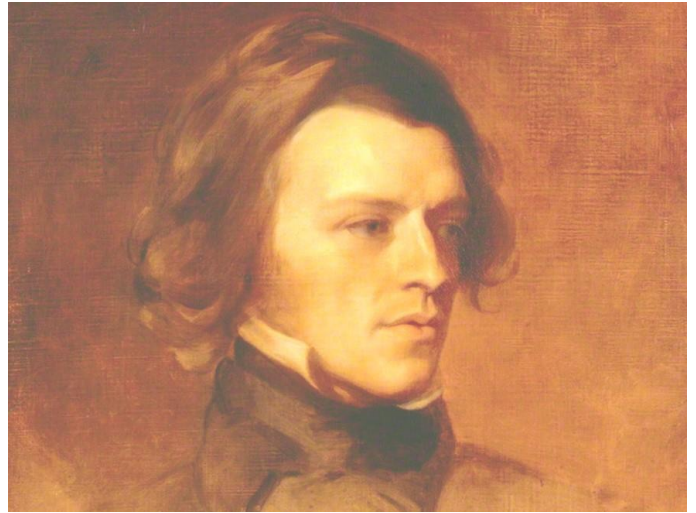
out "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as "unalienable rights" which have been given to all humans by the creator and governments are created to ensure and protect these unalienable rights. I want to suggest that the pursuit of happiness does not guarantee happiness. In fact, what it will produce is selfishness. Paul's perspective is that rejoicing on the other hand is a choice. It

is an act of the will. It is a decision. He says: **I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice ...** Here is a man that is looking to the future.

The decision to rejoice is based on two certainties. Verse 19 begins with these words: **19 for I know that**. There are two things that Paul knows and can depend on. The first is this: **19 for I know that through your prayers...** He can depend on the prayers of his fellow believers. What an encouragement it is when we go through difficult times if we know that there are others who are standing with us. It is important to know that these are people who are not just thinking of us from time to time but are praying for us. It is nice to be thought of. It is even better to be prayed for. How blessed we are at St. Andrew's to have a church that believes in the power of prayer. We have a prayer circle that if they are informed of illness or a need, will be diligent about remembering you in prayer. We have the Friday Night Prayer Group that makes it their business to pray about the needs of this congregation and the people in this congregation. Prayers for the People By the People is something we did every Sunday morning until the pandemic brought it to a halt. Then we continued to make it a part of the services by emailed it out to our members. When I can, I still do these prayers on a Sunday morning. You may feel that it has made no difference in the lives of those in our congregation who have been prayed for. I strongly disagree. I believe that there are people alive here today because of the faithful prayers of this congregation. I believe that many, in times of crisis, have the comfort of knowing that they will be prayed for. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom, wrote these words in Idylls of the King:

***“Pray for my soul.
More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of:
Wherefore, let thy voice,
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.”***

Every one of us should covet the prayers of others.



Here is the second certainty: **Yes, and I will rejoice, [19](#) for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.** Note Paul’s confidence in his ultimate deliverance. The Greek word he uses for deliverance is *soterian* which is generally translated as “salvation” and usually is used of the final deliverance of believers at the last judgment when they will stand vindicated before God. No matter what Caesar did to him, whether setting him free or killing him, Paul was confident of his ultimate deliverance. In 2 Timothy 4 he writes: **[18](#) The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

Paul was not self-sufficient. His confidence in his deliverance rests on the prayers of God’s people which would in turn bring on the supply of the Spirit of Christ in his life. The New Testament, and particularly the Book of Acts, repeatedly demonstrates that God’s servants are regularly empowered with the anointing of the Holy Spirit during times of trial. In Romans 8 Paul puts it this way: **[26](#) In the same way, the Spirit helps** (better yet, “supplies”) **us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. [27](#) And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.** The word intercede means to intervene on behalf of another, to plead for another. As other Christians pray for you it activates the Holy Spirit to intercede and plead for you before the throne of God. How do I know that? It is because this is what God does for “the saints” and that includes you!

Here is our real problem. Our real problem is that we do not understand God and therefore we do not understand how he works. When bad things happen to us, we think it is devastating. We are convinced that God is punishing us. We believe that

nothing can change. We are Christian atheists! Now listen to what God says he wants to do for all who grieve or mourn. Isaiah 61:

- 1** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me ...
2 to comfort all who mourn;
3 to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

Let me tell you what our God is like. He transforms evil into good. He brings light out of darkness. The darkness is not dark to him. He makes the night shine like the day. He turns our ashes into glory.



One of my favourite Old Testament stories is that of Joseph. This young man really did nothing wrong, but his brothers hated him. When they had the chance, they sold him as a slave. When he arrived in Egypt, he got a break and landed a good job. But then his bad luck kicked in again. His master's wife falsely accused him of sexual assault and he landed in

prison for a period of years. He helped a fellow prisoner gain his freedom, but the man promptly forgot him. Finally, God vindicated Joseph and he turned out to be the Saviour of Egypt and his own family. When he had the golden opportunity to retaliate against his brothers, he showed them kindness instead. In Genesis 50 we are given a picture of the heart of this man, but even more importantly, we see the true heart of God. **19** But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? **20** As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

I tell you, if this is how we see God; One who is able to transform evil into good, mourning into gladness and ashes into glory, then we can say with Paul: **20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Or as Job put it in chapter 13: **15** Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.

Hymn #642: “O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee”

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. The lyrics are on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXwXQnsaL3A>

1. O Master let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free
Tell me Thy secret
Help me bear the strain of toil
The fret of care

2. Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, clearer company
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong
In trust that triumphs over wrong

3. In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broad'ning way
In peace that only Thou canst give
With Thee, O Master, let me live

Offering

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) **We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer.** This note from our treasurer.

E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. standrewspert offering@gmail.com Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (eg Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Invitation to Offering

With thankfulness we give in gratitude and joy.
With prayerfulness we give in sacrifice and love.
With hopefulness we give in commitment to God.

Offertory Prayer

God of wonder,
we offer you these humble gifts,

signs of your goodness and mercy.
 Receive them with our gratitude,
 that through us all people may know
 the riches of your love in the Word-made-flesh. **Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer

Closing Hymn:

Go Now In Peace

(Click on the link below to play the video. Lyrics on the screen)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T_KSLqIAcM

1. Go now in peace, never be afraid
 God will go with you each hour of every day
 Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true
 Know God will guide you in all you do.

2. Go now in love, and show you believe.
 Reach out to others so all the world can see.
 God will there watching from above.
 Go now in peace, in faith and in love.

Benediction

Go now as those who have found favour in the sight of God.
 Be imitators of Jesus Christ
 and an example to all of the life of faith.
 To the world in which you live, give your love and service,
 and to God, give all that you are and all that you shall be.

And may the glory of God's goodness be revealed to you;
 May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ take root in you;
 And may the inspiration of the Holy Spirit fill you with joy.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.