

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
January 24th, 2021
Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

(Based on Psalm 29)

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
 ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
 worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.**

The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
 the God of glory thunders,
 the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

**The voice of the LORD is powerful;
 the voice of the LORD is majestic.**

And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
 the LORD is enthroned as King forever.

**The LORD gives strength to his people;
 the LORD blesses his people with peace.**

Prayer of Invocation

Glorious God, we come to worship and praise you in response to your voice that calls us to our home in you. We join with all the voices of the earth, together with all the voices of the heavens, to praise the glorious name of our God; and to bow down in awe before the mighty energies of our God, as we experience them, not just in nature, but in every aspect of life.

In this time of upheaval and uncertainty, when pestilence stalks the face of the earth, impress upon our hearts that your voice, which is powerful and majestic, is heard throughout the earth and is the only voice we need to heed. With conviction may we cry out, "The Lord our God is enthroned as King forever". May our praises declare your glory! Strengthen your people and bless us with your peace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn #313: "O Worship the King", Grace Community Church
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0a1Pq9avbg>

1. O worship the King all glorious above
And gratefully sing His power and His love
Our Shield and Defender the Ancient of Days
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise
2. O tell of His might O sing of His grace
Whose robe is the light whose canopy space
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm
3. Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite
It breathes in the air it shines in the light
It streams from the hills it descends to the plain
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain
4. Frail children of dust and feeble as frail
In Thee do we trust nor find Thee to fail
Thy mercies how tender how firm to the end
Our Maker Defender Redeemer and Friend

Let Us Confess Our Faith in the Words of the Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
very God from very God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.**

**He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.**

**And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come. Amen.**

Call to Confession (Psalm 32:1-5)

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

**Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

For when I kept silent, my bones 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.**

I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;

**I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Prayer of Confession (Psalm 25:6-8, 11,

Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.

The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
bring me out of my distresses.
Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
In the name of Jesus of Nazareth,
We lay our plea before you. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Whenever a people humble themselves,
turn from their evil ways,
and put their hope and trust in divine mercy,
God sees and forgives their sin,
and enfolds them in the strength and love of Christ our Lord.

Sisters and Brothers, your sins are forgiven; be at peace.

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 62:5-12

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.

**He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**

On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

**Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us.**

Those of low estate are but a breath;
those of high estate are a delusion;
in the balances they go up;
they are together lighter than a breath.

**Put no trust in extortion;
set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, set not your heart on them.**

Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:

**that power belongs to God,
and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.**

Ministry of Music: “Praise the Father, Praise the Son” Chris Tomlin (Lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zpylc7aR8BQ>

1. O sov'reign God O matchless King
The saints adore the angels sing
And fall before the throne of grace
To You belongs the highest praise

2. These sufferings this passing tide
Under Your wings I will abide
And ev'ry enemy shall flee
You are my hope and victory

Chorus 1

(Oh) praise the Father praise the Son
(And) praise the Spirit Three in One
Clothed in power and in grace
The name above all other names

3. To the valley for my soul
Thy great descent has made me whole
Your word my heart has welcomed home
Now peace like water ever flows

Chorus 1

(Oh) praise the Father praise the Son
(And) praise the Spirit Three in One
Clothed in power and in grace
The name above all other names
(Oh) praise the Father praise the Son
(And) praise the Spirit Three in One
Clothed in power and in grace
The name above all other names

Bridge

Yours is the kingdom Yours is the power
Yours is the glory forever
Yours is the kingdom Yours is the power
Yours is the glory forever
Yours is the kingdom Yours is the power
Yours is the glory forever

Yours is the kingdom Yours is the power
Yours is the glory forever

Chorus 2

Praise the Father praise the Son
And praise the Spirit Three in One
Clothed in power and in grace
The name above all other names
The name above all other names

Scripture Reading:

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

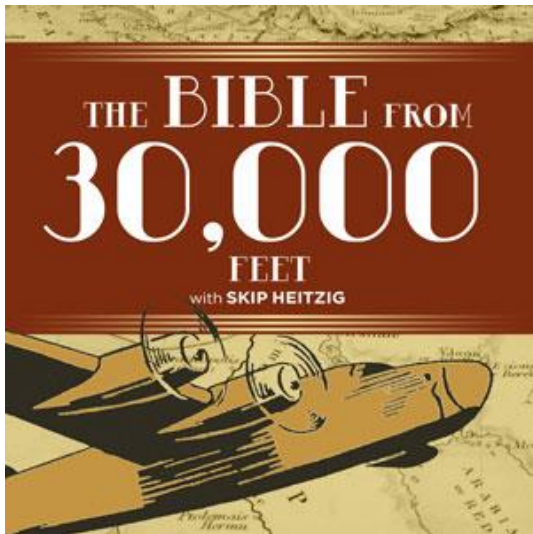
Lord God,
some times the words of Scripture are hard to understand.
There are times when there appear to be more than one interpretation.
This morning, guide us by your Spirit,
so that the mountains and hills will be brought low,
the rough ways will be made smooth,
and you're your true intention will shine forth like the morning sun.
Reveal to us the true nature of Jesus your Son,
So that we may discover his true path for
and be partakers of his great salvation. **Amen.**

“Having Humility, The Attitude of Jesus”

Philippians 2: 5-8

When I think back over all the sermons I have written and preached, I realize that on a number of occasions I have said up front, “This is a very important story” or “This is a very important passage.” Sometimes I have gone even further and said: “This is one of the most important passages in the Bible.” Now, don't get me wrong. The Bible in its totality, being the Word of God, is of importance. However, what we are going to look at today, the first part of Philippians 2:5-11 is not just very important. It

ranks right up there as one of the top 10 essential passages in the New Testament. What we learn here is extremely important, both theologically and personally. Why is it so important? Because it deals with the nature of Jesus. What you believe about the nature of Jesus will determine whether Jesus is just a great man or qualifies to be your Saviour. It all hinges on how you interpret this passage.



We are looking at Philippians in small sections, but we need to remember that this book is really an epistle – a letter that was meant to be read as a whole. It would be nice if we could look at this book from 30,000 feet. That would give us a nice overview. But we want more than an overview. We want to see it up close. Today, we are going to be looking at this passage as if we are going through airport security and we get flagged for a closer inspection. Let's up the stakes and say that security is going through our belongings looking for illicit drugs.

To do this our suitcases need to be unpacked. Not unpacked liked we would unpack them when we arrived home but unpacked in the sense of going through all our belongings with a fine toothed comb. They may even bring in a dog from the canine unit to try and sniff out the presence of any drugs.



We started unpacking this suitcase of Philippians 2 in early January when we looked at the these verses. **3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** **4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.** These verses are a call to humility, to consider the needs and interests of others above our own.

Today's passage begins with these words: **5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.** Here we are called upon to have, in our relationship with others, the same mindset – the same orientation in life – that Jesus had. Verses 6 to 8 describe the mindset, the activity, the attitude that was reflected in Jesus. We know that verses 3 and 4 are tied together with verses 6 to 8 because we see some of the same words being repeated. Verse 3 says **in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** In verse 6 we find the

word **count** being used again and in verse 8 the word **humbled**. It may seem to you that we are going through these verses with a fine-tooth comb. You may even consider that I am splitting hairs as we minutely look at what these verses tell us about Jesus. However, this is a necessary unpacking and search, because these verses contain the most succinct and important description of the nature of Jesus in all the New Testament.

In verses 3 and 4 Jesus calls us to a certain way of life. In verses 6 to 8 Paul illustrates the mindset that we are called to in verse 3 and 4. In verses 6 to 8 Paul sets out Christ Jesus as the model for us. He sets out the example of this lifestyle. It is not unusual in other religions for the founder to be presented as a model or example for his followers to pattern their lives after. But I want to stress to you that this is different. John Piper puts it this way. *“Christ Jesus is always more than an example or model – but never less.”* In other words, it is wrong to consider Jesus as only our model or example. That Jesus is a model or example is undeniable, as the following verses make clear.

1 Peter 2: **21** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. **22** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. **23** When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. **24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Clearly, Christ set us an example here. It was an example of suffering. It also says that Christ bore our sins, and as a result his life was so much more than just an example. So, we don't merely try to copy Jesus Christ. Remember John Piper's words: *“Christ Jesus is always more than an example or model – but never less.”*

In the summer of 1999, Susan and I were at my parents cottage with Andrew and Emily. It was the tradition at the cottage that we always started the day with devotions. We took turns leading devotions and it was not always an easy task because of the age spread of the participants. That summer day we had an 8 year old, a 12 year old, a 40 and 50 something and two 82 year olds. So you can see there was quite

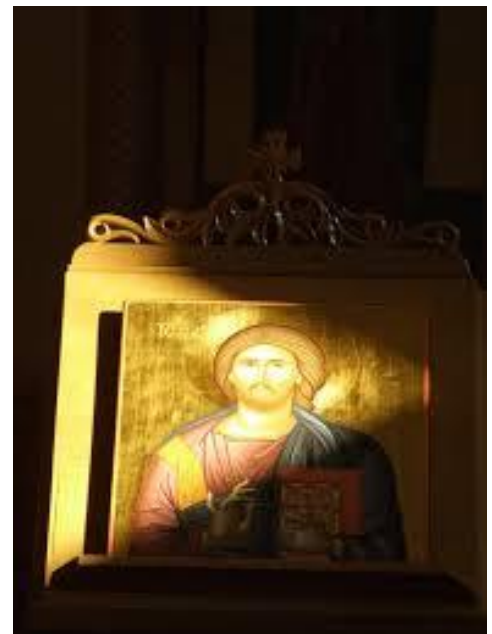


an age spread. It was my turn to do devotions that particular morning. The passage I chose was Philippians 2:5-11. How do you make it meaningful for all involved? I gathered everyone out on the back deck at the top of the stairs that led down to the lake. Then I started to walk down the stairs as I recited verses 6 to 8. What I wanted everyone to grasp was what the descent of humility looked like for Jesus. Almost every phrase in these verses represented a step that Jesus took as he walked the pathway of humility that was set before him. No one forced Jesus to take this path. It was a path that he chose to willingly follow. But oh what he gave up as he descended step by step. Oh what it cost him to take that journey. We need to understand exactly what each step represented, for on it hinges the very nature of Jesus and our salvation.

At the start of verse 6, Jesus is standing on the deck at the very top of the stairs. This is **Step “0” or Ground “0”**.

6 Who, being in very nature (in the form of) God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped...

This verse begins with the nature of Jesus Christ, the nature he had before his Incarnation – before his humanity. What does it mean when it says: **Being in the form of God**? God here is simply a shortened form of God the Father. There are two possibilities. It could mean that Jesus was only like God but that he was not really God. He was only similar to the Divine. The second possibility is that it means, as it says in the Nicene Creed, that he was **Light from Light, very God from very God**. (If you have trouble understanding this phrase, then insert the word “true” for “very”. “True God from true God.”) In other words, Jesus, before his Incarnation, was Divine. Knowing the Greek does not help us in our understanding here, we have to pay close, careful attention to the context. This is where we get out our fine-tooth comb.



How does **form of God** relate to **equality with God**? It means sameness with God or equal with God. Now we need to ask, “What is meant by **a thing to be grasped**?”



Again, we have two possibilities. One would be that it means not grasped as in reaching for it. In other words, Jesus is reaching or grasping for equality with God but he doesn't yet have it. The other possibility is that it means not grasping a thing as in hold on to it. In this case Jesus does not need to hold onto equality with God because he already has it. Orthodox Christianity would see this as the **First Step** in the descent of

Christ Jesus in humility, but how can we be sure that this is a right interpretation?

Let's look at the **Second Step** and see if it helps clarify things for us. **7 but emptied himself...** The New International Version uses the phrase **7 rather, he made himself nothing**, but the literal translation

is emptied. Again, we have two possibilities as to what this could mean, the first of which really makes no sense. If Jesus didn't have equality with God – if he was grasping for something he didn't yet have – then what was there to empty?

Let's look at these two verses together to see the second possibility. **6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself...**

Jesus already had equality with God but did not consider it something to be held onto. Instead, he emptied himself of the rights and privileges of Deity. He emptied himself of whatever stood between him and death. Here are some other passages that back up this interpretation.

Colossians 2: **9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily...**

Hebrews 1: **1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the**



exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

John 5: **18** This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, **making himself equal with God**.

This brings us to the **Third Step**. Let us begin this step by briefly presenting a few other significant passages that refer to Jesus.

Colossians 1: **15** He is the **image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation. Here “image” is like “form” which we have already examined.

Colossians 2: **9** For in him the **whole fullness of deity dwells bodily**.

Jesus emptied himself **by taking the form of a servant**. The Greek word here translated “servant” is *doulos* and it can also be translated as “slave”. Whether we

translate it as servant or slave, you have to admit that this is a significant step down – a significant act of humiliation, as when Jesus at the Last Supper took off his outer robe and stooped down to wash the feet of his disciples. There Jesus took the form of a servant or slave. In emptying himself, Jesus literally took the form of a servant. The word



“form” here does not exclude his humanity.

Step 4 follows quickly. **7** but emptied himself, ... being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form...

Someone is going to say, “Well, being born in the likeness of men means that Jesus was not really human. He only appeared to be human.” However, what we have looked at already would exclude this. In Romans 8

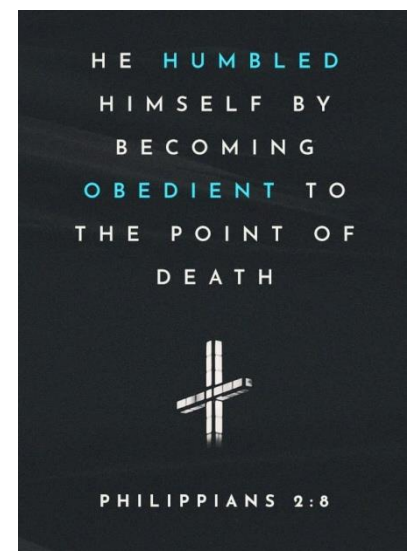


Paul writes: **3 For God has done what the law ... could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin...** Jesus, born in Bethlehem's manger, was born in the likeness of sinful flesh. That birth did not exclude his humanity, but only his sinfulness.

Just as the being **in the form of God** did not exclude equality with God, so being **born in the likeness of men** does not exclude his identity as human or his likeness as human. Jesus was "very man of very man" or "true man of true man". As Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2: **5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.** To be a mediator between God and men he became a man. He was not just like a man. He was man. Likeness and form, which are basically synonyms for one another, do not distance Jesus from his humanity but only from **sinful humanity**.

Before we look at our last two steps, let us state what Jesus emptied himself of. He didn't empty himself of his Deity. As Jesus says in John 17: **5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.** So, there was a kind of glory that Jesus laid aside. Some of that radiance he brought with him. Hebrews 1 says, **3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...** In John 1 we read, **14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.** At the same time there is a glory that Jesus enjoyed with the Father before he came to earth. (John 17:5) So Jesus emptied himself of a prerogative of a certain kind of glory with the Father from all eternity. Jesus laid it all aside to become obedient unto death on a cross – which ***is our only Hope***.

Step 5. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death. This step of humility we find easier to understand. At least we understand the seriousness of the step. How many of us would be willing to voluntarily give up our wealth and possessions; to give up our position and status in life? Even if we were prepared to voluntarily give up all that, would we be willing to sink so low as to become slaves? And even if we were prepared to give up our freedom and become slaves, how many of us would be willing to humble ourselves even further and die for something or someone else when we ourselves had done no wrong? This is the example that Jesus set for us. This is what humility is all



about. It is dying to self. It is not just being willing but actually choosing to [10](#) **become like him in his death.** (Philippians 3:10) This is a huge step that very few have ever been willing to take.

Now we come to the final step. **Step 6. [8](#) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** You can't sink any lower than that. You can't lower yourself any lower than



Jesus did; yet it was this last step that makes all the difference for us. Galatians 3 says: [13](#) **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—** [14](#) **so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.** Jesus did

not just die. There have been many down through history who have died for someone else. One of the great modern examples is the Roman Catholic priest Father Maximilian Kobe who died in a Nazi concentration camp in order to spare the life of another prisoner. No, Jesus did not just die. In his death he became a curse for us. As a result of this ultimate humility, he not only redeemed us but bestowed upon us the ultimate blessing – that we might become the true children of God.

I doubt that anyone else remembers that day on the back porch of the cottage. Susan has no memory of it. My Dad and his wife are both gone. But I will never forget that day and that demonstration. This is one of those cases where the lesson had a greater impact on the teacher than the students. Whenever I see this picture or think of that example that I used, I am reminded of the deep humility of Jesus and what he has done for me. If Jesus had been just a great man, then he would have qualified to be an example for me to follow, but nothing more. However, because



Jesus Christ was “true God of true God” and because he emptied himself of his divine prerogatives to become “true man of true man”, he qualifies to be my true Mediator and Saviour. He is my only hope of salvation – and yours. Apart from Jesus, we have nothing.

Hymn #324: Great Is Thy Faithfulness - Austin Stone Worship Live (Lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eQ1oal44wU>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
 As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

Chorus

Great is Thy faithfulness
 Great is Thy faithfulness
 Morning by morning new mercies I see
 All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

I could not love Thee, so blind and unfeeling,
 Covenant promises fell not to me
 Then without warning, desire, or deserving,
 I found my Treasure, my pleasure in Thee

I have no merit to woo or delight Thee
 I have no wisdom or power to employ
 Yet in Thy mercy, how pleasing Thou find'st me
 This is my pleasure that Thou art my joy

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
 Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
 Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

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 (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Invitation to Offering

God has shown us the meaning of generosity
 in the beautiful diversity of creation,
 in the overflowing love of Jesus Christ,
 in the never-ending gift of the Holy Spirit.

God has abundantly blessed us and called us
 to be a community that honors each other,
 to serve others with joy,
 to share our love and material possessions.

Let us rejoice in what we have been given
 and in what is ours to give.

Responsive Offertory Prayer

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness,
 the power and the glory,
 the victory and the majesty.

**All that is in the heavens
 and in the earth is yours,
 and you rule over all.**

Therefore, Lord, receive these offerings,
 our tangible expressions of love and gratitude.

**Transform them into a source of life for many,
 so that your kingdom may grow
 in the hearts of all.**

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Listen carefully to this call to prayer.

[26](#) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27](#) And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8)

Pastoral Prayer

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,
 we thank you for the gift of faith
 worked within us by your Holy Spirit.
 We thank you for having called us to yourself,
 for consecrating us to your service,

for having set us apart to the sacred ministry of prayer.
O Lord and Father of the household of faith,
we pray for the church
in all her breadth and variety,
gathered out of every nation, family, people, and tongue,
to be a kingdom of priests serving you.
We pray for the church in all the world,
for churches in North America, Europe, and the Middle East,
for churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,
for young churches and old churches,
small churches and large churches,
weak churches and strong churches.
Grant to the church true lowliness
and genuine humility where there is pride, unity where there is division.
Grant to her truth where there is error and wisdom where there is folly,
that you might fulfill your purposes for her.
O Lord and Father of the household of faith,
we pray for those stewards to whom you have
entrusted the affairs of your house,
for pastors, elders, lay leaders, volunteers, and committees.
Give them the spirit of willing service and true humility.
Give them a sense of spiritual devotion.
Give them delight in those whom they serve.
Grant that they may lead your people in the way of Christ,
that thereby we might all enter the land of our heritage.
O Lord and Father of the household of faith,
we pray for all peoples of all nations.
We pray that in every land there might be peace and true justice
(especially in the United States and other places of conflict).
Grant that in our own communities
those who are troubled,
those who suffer,
those who are discouraged
might find support in time of need
especially from your church.
Particularly we remember before you
the work done for the troubled, the suffering, and the discouraged
by the members of our congregation.
O Lord and Father of the household of faith,
we pray for our nation and

So, I will go wherever He is calling me
I lose my life to find my life in Him
I give my all to gain the hope that never dies
I bow my heart take up my cross and follow Him
I bow my heart take up my cross and follow Him

Benediction

Go now, follow where Christ calls you
and proclaim the message God gives you.
Wait in hope for God.
Avoid become bound up in the business of the world,
but live in readiness for the inbreaking of the Kingdom.

And may God be your haven and your glory;
May Christ Jesus give you courage for his mission;
And may the Spirit embrace your soul in God's silence.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.