

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, March 14th, 2021
Worship Leader: Rev. John McIntyre

Welcome

Call to Worship

(Psa 107:1-3, 17-22)

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble

and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;

they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

Prayer of Invocation

Our gracious God and awesome Saviour, creator and source of all life, we are gathered to worship and praise you. In the beginning, you spoke words which brought order and light and life out of chaos and darkness. We marvel at such evidence of your greatness and glory. Yet, you laid these aside when you took on human flesh in Jesus Christ. In Him we gain a new understanding of your power and glory, for he has revealed through his life, and his cross, that true power denies self and serves others, and that his glory is made visible through loving and serving others. We marvel anew at the depth of your care for us and the many ways our lives have been blessed by the sacrificial life and love of Jesus. It is because of him that we are gathered here today, and it is in his name that we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn #407: "Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KEKIQyAad0>

Verse 1

Praise my soul the King of heaven
 To His feet thy tribute bring

Ransomed healed restored forgiven
 Evermore His praises sing
 Alleluia, Alleluia
 Praise the everlasting King

Verse 2

Praise Him for His grace and favour
 To our fathers in distress
 Praise Him still the same as ever
 Slow to chide and swift to bless
 Alleluia, Alleluia
 Glorious in His faithfulness

Verse 3

Father-like He tends and spares us
 Well our feeble frame He knows
 In His hands He gently bears us
 Rescues us from all our foes
 Alleluia, Alleluia
 Widely as His mercy flows

Verse 4

Angels in the heights adoring
 You behold Him face to face
 Saints triumphant bow before Him
 Gathered in from every race
 Alleluia, Alleluia
 Praise with us the God of grace

Call to Confession (Psa 145:8, 18-19)

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.

Scripture reminds us that even as God's redeemed and adopted children, we still sin. And so we need to confess our failures in this department, knowing that the Lord Jesus intercedes for us with the Father, who freely forgives us, through his infinite goodness and mercy on the basis of our Saviour's shed blood. So let us draw near to God with sincerity and confidence, and pray together...

Prayer of Confession

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we lower our heads before you and we confess that we have too often forgotten that we are yours, having been redeemed from the futility of our original lostness through the precious blood of

Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. Sometimes we carry on our lives as if there was no God and we fall short of being a credible witness to you. For these things we ask your forgiveness and we also ask for your enabling grace to cast aside the sin that so easily entangles us. Give us clear minds and open hearts so we may witness to you in our world. Remind us to be who you would have us to be, regardless of what we are doing or who we are with. Hold us to yourself, and by your word and Holy Spirit strengthen our relationship with you and with those you have given us on earth, to your glory and Christ's exaltation, for his names sake. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

(1Tim 1:15) *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* (Rom 8: 33-34) *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* Brothers and sisters, Christ died for our sins. He made a full atonement for us. We are forgiven and we have the promise of eternal life. Feel that forgiveness in your heart. We are His children. **Amen.**

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

Psa 107:1-10; 17-21

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble

and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;

they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

Ministry of Music #375:

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olGUjFwR6v8>

Verse 1

Fairest Lord Jesus Ruler of all nature
O Thou of God and man the Son
Thee will I cherish Thee will I honor
Thou my soul's glory joy and crown

Verse 2

Fair are the meadows fairer still the woodlands
Robed in the blooming garb of spring
Jesus is fairer Jesus is purer
Who makes the woeful heart to sing

Verse 3

Fair is the sunshine fairer still the moonlight
And all the twinkling starry host
Jesus shines brighter Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels heav'n can boast

Verse 4

Beautiful Saviour Lord of all the nations
Son of God and Son of Man
Glory and honor praise adoration
Now and forevermore be Thine

Scripture Reading:**Eph 2:1-10**

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Prayer for Illumination

Guide us, O Lord, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Saga of Redemption

(Gal 3:13a)

If the Christmas season speaks to us a message of “Christ with us,” then surely the Easter season speaks a message of “Christ for us.” And so as we make our way toward Easter it is particularly fitting that we give heightened attention to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the Creator of all things, the One in whom the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form.

There is always a need to concentrate on Him, first, because of the pull of culture against & away from him...The *all roads lead to God* idea – Along with the erosion of truth, the intensified role of relativism, subjectivism, wokeism, critical-theory and other anti-Christ philosophies.

I am not sure if you are aware of it but there is a new religion that is surging like a tsunami through every facet of western culture. It is shaping and redefining

society as it goes. Although it has not been organized into any formal religious structure, it functions along the lines of religious doctrine. It masquerades under the guise of compassion and justice, but underneath is an malevolent ideology that is incompatible with western values and incongruent with the Christian worldview.

This movement is characterized by terms like; political correctness, and cancel culture. Identity politics and critical theory are broader descriptors. But the religiosity of this sweeping tide of shifting values is best captured under the term, "Wokeism."

Again, though not organized into any formal religious structure it functions as a religion with its doctrine as it evaluates the human condition and creates its redemption narrative. It has been on the ascent for many years and has as its goal, the liberation of human beings from the circumstances that enslave them.

It sounds noble, but it is all of man's connivance and not grounded in any way, shape, or form, on the one who came from heaven, *to proclaim good news to the poor... to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.* (Lk 4:18-19)

Then we need to intensify our attention on Christ because of, the persecution of Christians becoming so rampant in the world. For example, State repression of Christians and other religious groups in China is well known. It is systematic, harsh and authorized at senior government levels, although they would try and persuade the West that there is no religious persecution in their country.

Persecution isn't limited to China. There are other regions of the world where Christians are killed, kidnapped, their church buildings burned and other kinds of harm brought their way. It happens in our own country. A number of years ago I heard the testimony of a man from one congregation that chose to stay true to the truths of the gospel in opposition to their denomination's laxity. The congregation had to leave their revered church building and gather for worship in another building. This may become more common in the days ahead, as the godly stand for Christ and his word.

Finally, and most importantly, we need to fix our gaze on Christ because of the preeminence given him in Scripture.

Jesus is pre-figured in the Old Testament. In (Jn. 5:46) he says, *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me."* In (Jn 5:39) he says, *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me"*

Of course he is presented to us throughout the New Testament. (Col. 1:17) tells us, *"He is before all things and in Him all things hold together."* John the Baptist points to him in (Jn 1:29) saying, *"Behold the Lamb of God who takes*

away the sin of the world.” Again Jesus says of himself (Jn 12:32), “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

And of course a favourite hymn, Man of Sorrows, contains these words:

Lifted up was He to die, It is finished was His cry;

Now in heav'n exalted high: Hallelujah, what a Saviour.

It is therefore crucial that, as Paul wrote, you and I, “*know nothing . . . except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” It is imperative to believe that Christ came into the world to save His people from their sin – In other words, to redeem them.

Some do not hold this key truth as being central to the gospel. The idea of sin, and redemption from sin, death and hell is repulsive. They find it more favourable to say he came to provide an example, or he came to show us the way, or he came to demonstrate God’s love. All these contain a measure of truth, to be sure. But the Scriptures boldly declare (Rom. 4:25), “*He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*” (NIV) (II Cor. 5:21), *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* James Denny rightly says, “*The work of Christ in relation to sin is the great thing in the gospel.*” Bible commentator Leon Morris writes: “*At the heart of Christianity there is a cross, and on that cross the Son of God wrought man’s salvation.*”

On the Sundays I am with you in next few months I plan to consider our Lord’s work under the heading: **The Saga of Redemption**. We will be focusing on the historical reality of His death as presented in the Scriptures, and the doctrinal meaning of that death.

As we consider the Saga of Redemption it will be what you might call a focus on the basics. And the first aspect of “The Basics” is found in this text from Galatians. (Gal 3:13a), “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by becoming a curse for us*”

This inspired statement provides us with key elements for us to consider as we begin. It speaks of the Law, of the curse, of Christ, of redemption and of us. Why is redemption required? It is required because we are all under a curse. Why is there a curse involved? There is a curse because there is a Law in place – and it has been broken. What is this Law that’s been broken? The law referred to here, signifies the laws given by God through Moses to the Children of Israel – and also to us in terms of its moral and judicial aspects. God’s Law was given so that people might fulfill and adhere to His will and reflect His persona.

What was it that God wanted them and us to reflect of Himself? It was God’s will that his people should reflect his Holiness. (Lev. 19:2), “*You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.*”

What are the implications of “I the LORD your God and holy?” It refers to much more than we can go into here today but, it speaks of the infinite purity of God’s

essential being. It refers to the love and delight He takes in his own purity. It has to do with its likeness in any of His creatures. It speaks of His perfect freedom from all impurity & His hatred of it wherever He sees it.

The very essence of His nature is holiness. (Rev. 4:8), "*The four living creatures . . . do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty' . . .*" God the Father is Holy, God the Son is Holy, and God the Spirit is Holy. All the works of God are holy. In the Creation account – All was pronounced good – very good at that. This was especially mankind – created in the image of God – thus possessing evidence of God & His holiness through his dominion over the earth as God's representative. The Bible tells us that God's word, his law, our worship, his dwelling place and people are holy. In every aspect of His being and of everything you can think about Him – He is holy! He is holy, he loves holiness, and he delights in it. And he requires it in every element of His created order. Holiness is due Him! And anything less is sin.

For God to be God, He must be honored as God, by His creatures. At Creation He blessed Adam by making His will known to him, particularly in relation to how he was to honour God. As a creature, he was to honour God through obedience.

God's will was that he eat from every tree but one. And should he eat from that tree, God would be dishonoured and His image besmirched.

God made His will known to Adam by giving him one rule. But Adam chose to disobey God and robbed Him of His due. And in refusing to obey God he sinned. Sin is basically failure to render God His due. By failing to give God His due, we take from God what is rightfully His & dishonor Him. That's what Adam did when he denied God the holy obedience that was due Him.

Well, what does God think of sin? God hates sin and sinners with an infinite hatred. (Psa. 5:5), "*You hate all who do iniquity.*" As a result (Heb. 12:14.), "*Without holiness, no one shall see God.*"

This leads to a further aspect of God's holiness – His justice. God is infinitely righteous, in Himself and in His dealings with all His creatures. For Adam, the promise of eternal life was the reward of obedience. For disobedience/sin, the reward was death. This is where the curse comes in. Obedience to God's laws brings eternal life. Disobedience brings about death. (Rom 5:12), "*. . . through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*" Adam's fall into sin had serious implications not only for himself, but for all who come after. What are they?

There are the implications of what man lost. He lost communion with God. He lost the gracious presence and favour of God. He was left, "*without hope, and without God in the world*" (Eph 2:12).

There are the implications of what man gained. Because of that fall into sin, mankind has been brought under God's wrath and curse. (Eph 2:3) describes the natural man in his sinful condition as being "*by nature, children of wrath*" By nature we are born wretched and miserable. By nature we are liable to miseries in this life, to death & to the pains of hell forever. How is His wrath and curse displayed? They are displayed in the miseries of life, external, internal, and spiritual.

Externally they are displayed in general calamities – Famines, Wars, Epidemics, and Terrorism etc. They are evidenced in personal tragedies – Sickness, Bankruptcies, Scandals, Family breakups, Deaths.

Internally & spiritually they are seen and experienced by enslavement to the devil, his will and his leading. They are displayed by spiritual blindness and a rebellious nature, hardness of heart, and numbness of conscience. Other evidences include vile actions, strong delusions, distress and perplexities of mind, dread and horror of the spirit and agonies of soul brought on by the apprehension of certain future wrath. These are just the miseries associated with us during this life. There is *also "the wrath to come"* (I Thess 1:10).

The Scriptures teach us (Rom 6:23) "*The wages of sin is death.*" Death is the due reward for all those under the curse. It is sent by God to arrest the wicked, and convey them to future misery – to the punishment of hell forever. What will punishment in hell consist of? It will consist of banishment from the comforting presence of God, exclusion from life in the new heavens and the new earth. It will amount to exposure of the senses to, the horror and anguish of God's vengeance.

(Vincent pictures it as), "*The stinging accusations of the, the never-dying worm of conscience. The aches and pains of every part of our bodies and all for eternity. All them that do iniquity shall be cast into a furnace of fire and 'There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'*"

God's vengeance will be swift, sure, just and terrible. God is holy and just. His law has been given. We are all guilty of breaking it. Mankind is thus under God's righteous and holy judgment and condemnation. That's the law and the curse.

But thanks be to God, (Gal 3:13a), "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.*" God has given us a Redeemer – The Lord Jesus Christ! He had provided redemption from the Law and the curse.

He is called Lord, because He has been given universal sovereignty and dominion. (Acts 10:36) declares that, "*He is Lord of all.*" All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.

He is called Jesus, because He is the Saviour of His people. (Matt. 1:21), "*You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.*"

He is called Christ, because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit by God the Father to do the Father's will in all that was necessary for the redemption of those under the curse. (Acts 10:38), *"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power,"* God has given redemption in the person of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Cor. 6:19), *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them."* And how has the Lord Jesus Christ redeemed His people?

He has redeemed His people, by purchase, – The currency being his own holy sinless blood. Redemption speaks of buying a slave at the market. By nature people are slaves to sin and sold to death and hell. Jesus purchased redemption by offering Himself as a sacrifice in our place. He exchanged places with us and it cost Him His own sinless life. (I Pet 1:18-19), *"You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."*

He has redeemed His people by conquest – Rescuing them by His almighty power out of the clutches of the devil. Jesus the redeemer has taken the devil's captives captive. (Col 2: 13-15), *"When you were dead in your transgressions . . . He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."*

Jesus came to redeem His people from their sins – *"to give His life a ransom for many."* Are you one of the "many?" (Gal 3:13a), *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us."* Are you one of the "us?" The Bible assures us that there will be no escape from the wrath of God apart from faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, (Jn. 3:14-15), *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."*

Salvation/Redemption is to be had nowhere else than in Jesus Christ. Salvation/Redemption is to be had in no one else than in Jesus Christ. He alone is Lord! Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This is our Redeemer and Saviour. Let us hold to Him and concentrate on Him this season and throughout all the days of our lives.

Hymn: "In Christ Alone", Songwriters: Keith Getty / Stuart Townend
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWiFYJMGas0>

In Christ alone my hope is found,
 He is my light, my strength, my song
 This Cornerstone, this solid Ground
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
 What heights of love, what depths of peace
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
 My Comforter, my All in All
 Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
 Fullness of God in helpless babe.
 This gift of love and righteousness,
 Scorned by the ones He came to save
 Till on that cross as Jesus died,
 The wrath of God was satisfied
 For every sin on Him was laid
 Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
 Light of the world by darkness slain:
 Then bursting forth in glorious day
 Up from the grave He rose again
 And as He stands in victory
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
 For I am His and He is mine
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
 This is the power of Christ in me
 From life's first cry to final breath,
 Jesus commands my destiny
 No power of hell, no scheme of man,
 Can ever pluck me from His hand
 Till He returns or calls me home
 Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

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

The Lord loves a cheerful giver. So let us present our offering to the God of all comfort who richly provides for us and let us do so with great cheer.

Offertory Prayer

Heavenly Father, the One who can satisfy our every desire and need. Your word says that we should give honour to you with the first fruits of our wealth. Accept our offerings as a gift of worship to you. Multiply what we give for the effective growth of your kingdom. May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith so that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. May we be filled with all the fullness of God. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, **Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father and our God, again we draw near to you in prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer, Intercessor and Friend. We thank you for entering our human experience in your indescribable gift proffered in our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation he brings to all who rest in him. We thank you for the innumerable spiritual blessings that are ours in him and for the temporal blessings that you lavishly pour out upon us: Family, friends, fellowship, the measure of health and strength allotted to each of us and for the faith hope and love you impart to us the undergirds our lives by your grace.

We pray for those in authority over us at each level of governance and ask that you give our elected leaders wisdom, discernment, fortitude and integrity as they administer the affairs they are called to oversee. We thank you for the downturn in Covid cases and for the vaccines that have recently arrived in our nation and that hold promise of protecting us against the virus. We again pray for all who serve in the continuing work of quelling the pandemic and ask that you would grant them persistence in carrying out their duties whatever they may be. And give them patient endurance when they grow weary.

We pray for the needs within this congregation. Many have been ill for lengthy periods. Many have been suffering for a long time. Some may never get better this side of their eternal dwelling place. Grant strength and a comforting attitude to those who care for them. And be pleased to minister to those who suffer, in

ways that speak peace into the very depths of their souls. May they know the sure hope that belongs to each person who rests in the Saviour and may they be sterling witnesses to Christ's power and love amid suffering and discomfort.

We pray for your provision of a gospel minister for this congregation, one who is strong in the doctrines of grace. May you be pleased to send a pastor who, as Theodore Beza describes, considers his sheep more dear to him than his own life, following the example of the Good Shepherd.

We pray for a great ingathering of souls in these days while continuing to thank you for the thousands who are coming to Christ in faith all around the world, many under the threat of persecution. Watch over us all and keep us in the faith, whether tempted to depart because of persecution or prosperity and ease.

Apart from you Lord God we can do nothing. On the other hand, we can do all things through Christ which strengthens us. We thus commend these matters to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with assurance that underneath all your children are you everlasting arms. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn #765: "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1q-fDpiKng>

Verse 1

We've a story to tell to the nations
That shall turn their hearts to the right
A story of truth and sweetness
A story of peace and light
A story of peace and light

Chorus

For the darkness shall turn to dawning
And the dawning to noonday bright
And Christ's great kingdom shall come to earth
The kingdom of love and light

Verse 2

We've a song to be sung to the nations
That shall lift their hearts to the Lord
A song that shall conquer evil
And shatter the spear and sword
And shatter the spear and sword

Verse 3

We've a message to give to the nations
That the Lord who reign-eth above
Hath sent us His Son to save us

And show us that God is love
And show us that God is love

Benediction

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.