

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Tolerance – Father's Day  
Luke 8:26-39

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

O Lord, our Lord,  
there are many places we could go this morning,  
**but we have desired to come to your house.**

There are many voices to which we can listen today,  
**but we desire to hear your voice.**

It would be easy to scatter,  
**but we have chosen to gather.**

We need to behold your beauty,  
**to inquire in your temple,**

to be wrapped in your love,  
**and to experience your renewing Spirit.**

Come close, Lord Jesus,  
**to fill us and renew us. Amen**

Prayer of Adoration

With you, gracious God,  
we move into this time of worship,  
grateful that you are never farther  
than the reach of our need and our prayer.  
You who tower over the universe  
are yet intimately present,  
always renewing the face of the earth,  
always renewing the faith of your children.

Now, in your mercy, make your way past  
 all that worries and distracts us  
 to lodge in us anew and to center  
 our small worship on your great glory. Amen

**Opening Hymn: “Only a Holy God” – CityAlight**

Who else commands all the hosts of heaven?  
 Who else could make every king bow down?  
 Who else can whisper and darkness trembles?  
 Only a Holy God

What other beauty demands such praises?  
 What other splendour outshines the sun?  
 What other majesty rules with justice?  
 Only a Holy God

Come and behold Him  
 The One and the Only  
 Cry out, sing holy  
 Forever a Holy God  
 Come and worship the Holy God

What other glory consumes like fire?  
 What other power can raise the dead?  
 What other name remains undefeated?  
 Only a Holy God

Come and behold Him  
 The One and the Only  
 Cry out, sing holy  
 Forever a Holy God  
 Come and worship the Holy God  
 (Chorus X2)

Who else could rescue me from my failing?  
 Who else would offer His only Son?  
 Who else invites me to call Him Father?  
 Only a Holy God  
 Only my Holy God

Come and behold Him  
 The One and the Only  
 Cry out, sing holy

Forever a Holy God  
Come and worship the Holy God  
(Chorus X3)

**Opening Hymn: “Good And Gracious King” – CityAlight**

I approach the throne of glory  
Nothing in my hands I bring  
But the promise of acceptance  
From a good and gracious King

I will give to You my burden  
As You give to me Your strength  
Come and fill me with Your Spirit  
As I sing to You this praise

You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome, I lift my voice  
To the King in need of nothing  
Empty handed I rejoice

You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome with joy I sing  
By Your love I am accepted  
You're a good and gracious King

O what grace that You would see me  
As Your child and as Your friend  
Safe, secure in You forever  
I pour out my praise again

You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome, I lift my voice  
To the King in need of nothing  
Empty handed I rejoice

You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome with joy I sing  
By Your love I am accepted  
You're a good and gracious King

Holy, holy, Lord Almighty  
Good and gracious

Good and gracious  
 Holy, holy, Lord Almighty  
 Good and gracious King  
 (X2)

You deserve the greater glory  
 Overcome, I lift my voice  
 To the King in need of nothing  
 Empty handed I rejoice

You deserve the greater glory  
 Overcome with joy I sing  
 By Your love I am accepted  
 You're a good and gracious King  
 You're a good and gracious King  
 You're a good and gracious King

### **Call to Confession**

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Almighty and merciful God,  
 we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.  
 We have followed too much  
 the devices and desires of our own hearts.  
 We have offended against your holy laws.  
 We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;  
 and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.  
 O Lord, have mercy upon us.  
 Spare those who confess their faults.  
 Restore those who are penitent,  
 according to your promises declared to the world  
 in Christ Jesus, our Lord.  
 And grant, O merciful God, for his sake,  
 that we may live a holy, just, and humble life  
 to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

### **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

#### Prayer for illumination

O gracious God and most merciful Father,  
 you have given us the rich and precious jewel of your holy Word.  
 Assist us with your Spirit, that it may be written in our hearts  
 to our everlasting comfort,  
 to reform us, to renew us according to your own image,  
 to build us up into the perfect building of Christ,  
 and to increase us in all heavenly virtues.  
 Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the same Jesus Christ's sake. Amen

### Scripture

#### Luke 8:26-39

##### **Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon**

<sup>26</sup> Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. <sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." <sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) <sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. <sup>32</sup> Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

<sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup> Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to

Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

### Children's Hymn

### Children's Lesson

### Sermon

Welcome back to the book of Luke. Today we will be looking at a piece of scripture which deals with the world we live in today, just as much as it did the world in which Jesus and the disciples lived.

We are told at the beginning of this scripture that Jesus and the disciples got into a boat and crossed over from Galilee to Gerasene. Gerasene would not be a place that you would find many Jews, first it is a land of gentiles, secondly, they had a herd of pigs wandering the shoreline, pigs were dirty and considered unholy just their presence would cause the Jews discomfort. On top of this is the fact they land in a graveyard, Jews were strictly forbidden to interact with the dead, it made them ritually unclean and unable to enter into the presence of others and God.

Then, to make it even more clear this was not a place where you would find any faithful Jew the first person that they encounter in this land is a demon possessed man. Not just demon possessed but demon infested, a man with a legion of demons within him. A Roman legion could be anywhere between One thousand and forty men and six thousand men. This is the legion of demons that meets Jesus as he enters into the land of the gentiles.

The possessed man had an unnatural strength, he had been bound and broken free from the people of the region many times. He was at the mercy of the demons who would force him out into the desert or into the graveyard where he would strip down and wander among the tombs. The man was tormented by the legion of demons that were living within him.

What is interesting is not just how the man is healed but the story of the man himself.

The people of Gerasene simply tolerated the man, his lifestyle, and his actions. Of course, they knew that something was wrong with him, however, they do not seem to be overly concerned

about helping him. They knew he needed help, after all he is hurting himself and running around naked in a graveyard, not the signs of sanity in any culture.

The broken chains are evidence that at some point they had tried to help him, however, either because they felt they could not, or they just gave up trying this demon possessed man was now tolerated, as long as he stayed out in the graveyard, his nakedness and self-harm did not matter to the people of the region. They had reached a place of tolerance and complacency, as long as he did not cost them anything, time, or money, they were fine with him living his life.

The only times they tried to stop him was when he acted out in a way that they could not tolerate, and even then, they did so halfheartedly, if they had really wanted to help him, they would have or they would have condemned him to die for his crimes.

It is this man, left to his own devices, his own sinful nature, that recognizes Jesus for who he is 'Jesus, Son of the Most High God.' Not only does he recognize him, but he begs Jesus not to torment him. Why would he do such a thing? Why would a man who is possessed by demons beg not to be relieved of his demons?

The man had fallen prey to his demons, they fully possessed him and then they continued to grow in him, adding to their number over and over, his sins multiplying until finally the legion existed within his being. No one had tried to help him when he was first possessed, they had simply let him be, tolerated his demonic behaviors and before they could do anything he is infested with demonic power.

The people of Gerasene tolerated him. This is the world we are living in now, we have become Gerasene, a world where we tolerate demonic behavior, a place where we accept sinful behavior, as long as it does not cost us too much time or too much money. As a society we are perfectly fine letting people be whoever they want to be, which would be fine if there was no devil and there was no hell. However, we know the truth that there is a God, there is a hell and when we let people become fully given into a life of sin that they are lost for all of eternity and as Christians we cannot do that, in the same way that Jesus could not just let this demon possessed man suffer for all of eternity.

That is why Jesus commands the demons out of the man and into the herd of pigs. He gives the man the freedom from his sinful nature, even though the demons try to stop him. He does this because he loves the man, and He loves the people of the region of Gerasene. Jesus believes not in tolerance but in transformation. He transforms the man from a demon possessed man into a disciple of God.

Jesus does what all of the people of the region had been unwilling to do, he confronts the man. He commands that the demons that have possessed him release him and in a matter of minutes the power of the Lord is displayed as the man is set free of all of the demons and sinfulness that had possessed him.

By tolerating the man's demons, the people of Gerasene had allowed more and more demons to come into this man as they took complete control of his being. By living with the live and let live attitude they had in fact condemned this man to suffering and eternal damnation. Jesus does just the opposite, he frees the man through his love, grace, and mercy.

This is the same challenge we have in the modern world; some people believe that we should just let people enjoy all of the pleasure of life that they want. We should let everyone see and practice anything that they wish, as long as it does not cost us too much time or money. After all we all have the gift of free will and freedom of choice. We should simply let people do what they wish because they know what is best for them.

This would be fine if we lived in a world without evil, without Satan and his influence. However, that is not the world we live in, instead we are called to be like Jesus, going out into the land and sharing the Good News of his Grace, mercy, love, and salvation both in our words and in our actions.

Satan, demons, and sin want to control every aspect of our lives. They seek to overwhelm us and keep us from enjoying the peace of heart, mind, and soul we find in God.

A preacher once said, 'Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay.'

As Thomas Watson said, 'Sin has the devil for its father, shame for its companion and death for its wages'

Jesus loved the possessed man in the graveyard, he loved the people of Gerasene. He wanted to bring salvation to all of them. Yet see how they reacted, when the people of the land heard that Jesus had healed this man, they come and see the man at the feet of Jesus, sane, clothed and learning, and instead of celebrating at his healing, instead of being thankful and grateful for the return of their countryman, they are fearful and ask Jesus to leave them.

This is another reality, there are people in this world who just do not wish to be saved. They can see someone brought out of the darkness of sin and into the light of God and they fear that, they are comfortable in their sins and do not wish to be changed. They want to continue in their pleasures seeking out the things of this world that grant them a fleeting escape.

Jesus came to bring them salvation from sin, from the false gods they had been serving, from Satan and his demons. But the people were content where they were, they did not want to change. They wanted to carry on in their world of tolerance, because if they tolerated someone else's sin, someone else would tolerate their sin. This is the world that Satan seeks to create, a world where he can create people enslaved to all forms of sins and addictions, a world in which he can create disparity, poverty, and division. Satan is at work doing his best to create division, to create marital discord, to cause fights in family and between friends. He is hard at work trying to find ways to legalize forms of human trafficking, promote racism, and



violence and death. He wants to tempt people to steal, to lie, to commit sexually immoral acts and though all of this destroy their own lives and the lives of those who love them.

And while he is at work doing this, the majority of the world, including many churches have turned a blind eye in his direction. Happy to continue on in the status quo, not wanting to get involved with the suffering that they see going on in the world around them. They turn inward, focusing on the things in their direct world, at times even setting aside worship, bible study and fellowship, not realizing the danger of what they are doing.

Then before they know what happens they have become like one of the churches described in the book of Revelation. Like the church of Ephesus, a church that has lost its passion for Jesus, for His Word, for His worship and His witnessing. Like the Church of Thyatira who slowly allowed evil to overtake it. The church of Laodicea who had become lukewarm towards its God. Or even like the church of Sardis who thought that they were alive in their faith, but Jesus said were dead in their faith.

We should not be tolerant of the evils of this world, so how are we called to resist them?

We are called to resist the same way in which Jesus does here, by bringing a message of the mercy, the grace, and the love of Jesus Christ to those who are lost. We defeat it by bringing the truth of the Word of God to anyone who will listen, through our thoughts, our actions, and our words. We defeat Satan by staying true to God even when the world decides to kick us out the same way the Gerasene's asked Jesus to leave their lands.

Jesus left the possessed man in the land of Gerasene, he was a lone light in a world of darkness that acted as a missionary of God and the Good News of Salvation in Christ. This is the same world that many of us may live and work in, a world where we feel as if we are the lone Christian. As we leave today know that we are called to be like this man who Jesus Saved from his sins, we are all called to be the ones who go proclaiming through the land in words and deed about how much Jesus Christ has done for us.

Let us pray,

**A Prayer for Defense and Deliverance**

We ask you, Master,  
 be our helper and defender.  
 Rescue those of our number in distress;  
 raise up the fallen;  
 assist the needy;  
 heal the sick;  
 turn back those of your people who stray;  
 feed the hungry;  
 release our captives;  
 revive the weak;

encourage those who lose heart.  
 Let all the nations realize that you are the only God,  
 that Jesus Christ is your Son,  
 and that we are your people and the sheep of your pasture.  
 In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**Source: Clement of Rome (c. 96)**

### **Invitation to Offering**

#### **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](mailto:standrewspert offering@gmail.com) If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it 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**

#### **Offertory Prayer**

Almighty and most merciful God,  
 from you comes every good and perfect gift.  
 We give you praise and thanks for all your mercies.  
 Your goodness has created us, your bounty has sustained us,  
 your discipline has chastened us, your patience has borne with us,  
 your love has redeemed us.  
 Give us a heart to love and serve you,  
 and enable us to show our thankfulness for all your goodness and mercy  
 by giving up ourselves to your service  
 and cheerfully submitting in all things to your blessed will,  
 through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

#### **Closing Hymn: "Yet Not I but through Christ in me" – CityAlight**

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer  
 There is no more for heaven now to give  
 He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom  
 My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
For my life is wholly bound to His  
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing, "All is mine"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay  
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing  
For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me  
Through the deepest valley He will lead  
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven  
The future sure, the price it has been paid  
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon  
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated  
Jesus now and ever is my plea  
Oh the chains are released, I can sing, "I am free"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
For He has said that He will bring me home  
And day by day I know He will renew me  
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
All the glory evermore to Him  
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

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Yet not I, but through Christ in me

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Almighty God, gracious Father,  
in the presence of your bounty keep us humble,  
in the presence of all people's needs make us compassionate and caring.

Give us faith in our praying and love in our serving,  
knowing that by your power  
all may find a new balance in living and a new victory in adversity.

We pray for all unhappy lives,  
those who are bitter and resentful, feeling life has given them a raw deal,  
those who are sensitive to criticism and quick to take offense,  
those who desire their own way, whatever the inconvenience  
or cost to others.  
May your judgment and mercy be for their healing.

We pray for those who are lonely,  
who are shy and self-conscious,  
who find it hard to make friends;  
those who are nervous and timid,  
who ever feel themselves strangers in a world they can scarcely understand.  
May your presence inspire confidence and ensure companionship.  
We pray for those who live with bitter regrets,  
for loving relationships brought to ruin,  
for opportunities freely given and woefully abused,  
for the bitterness of defeat or betrayal at another's hand,  
or for failure in personal integrity.  
May your grace give new hope to find victory in the very scene of failure.

We pray for all in illness and pain,  
weary of the day and fearful of the night.  
Grant healing, if it be your will,  
and at all times through faith the gift of your indwelling peace.

Bless the company of Christ's folk, the church in every land.  
Make her eager in worship,  
fearless in proclamation of the gospel, and passionate for caring.

Bless our country. Bless our leaders.  
Bless our children and grant us peace within our borders.

Grant us as a nation to be found effective in establishing peace throughout the world.

Bless us, each one, in the communion of the saints, and keep us ever mindful of the great cloud of witnesses that, following in their steps, as they did in the steps of the Master, we may with them at the last receive the fulfillment promised to your people.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen

### **Benediction**

As you leave this place this day,  
may God's love sustain you,  
and may you love those who surround you.  
May God's Spirit empower you,  
and may you empower all those you meet.  
May God's joy fill your hearts,  
and may this joy overflow  
to the ends of the earth for God's glory,  
now and forever. Amen.