

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Seasons of Life  
Proper 16  
Luke 13:10-17

Welcome

Call to Worship

With all our hearts, let us praise the Lord.

**With all that we are, we will praise God's holy name!**

With all our hearts, let us bless the Lord.

**We will never forget how kind God has been.**

The Lord forgives our sins, heals our weakness, and gives us life everlasting.

**Let us worship God who is merciful and patient, God's love never fails.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God, our strength and refuge,

We come together to worship you and praise your loving kindness.

In your presence, we rest from what distracts us,

to focus on your truth and goodness.

You call us to live in relationship with you.

Through the love of Jesus Christ, you repair our lives.

Through the power of your Spirit, you engage us to serve you in the world.

Receive our prayers and our praise this day,

Creator, Christ, and Spirit,

revive our hope and our energy

and make us ready to answer your call. Amen.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**O God, our judge and our hope,**

**we confess we often turn away from your truth,**

**and ignore your call to do justice.**

**Forgive us when we say one thing in worship**

**but do another in the ways we live.**

**Forgive us when we ignore how others are treated**

**and think only of ourselves.**

**Let your judgment awaken us and your mercy refresh us.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
 Believe the good news of the Gospel.  
 In Christ, God has offered us mercy and love.  
 Receive God's forgiveness this day  
 and share it with each other for Christ's sake.

**Opening Hymns**

**10,000 Reasons – Matt Redman**

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
 Oh my soul  
 Worship His Holy name  
 Sing like never before  
 Oh my soul  
 I'll worship Your Holy name

The sun comes up  
 It's a new day dawning  
 It's time to sing Your song again  
 Whatever may pass  
 And whatever lies before me  
 Let me be singing  
 When the evening comes

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
 Oh my soul  
 Worship His Holy name  
 Sing like never before  
 Oh my soul  
 I'll worship Your Holy name

You're rich in love  
 And You're slow to anger  
 Your name is great  
 And Your heart is kind  
 For all Your goodness  
 I will keep on singing  
 Ten thousand reasons  
 For my heart to find

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name  
Bless You Lord

And on that day  
When my strength is failing  
The end draws near  
And my time has come  
Still my soul will  
Sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years  
And then forevermore  
Forevermore

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

**His Mercy is More**

Praise the Lord  
His mercy is more  
Stronger than darkness  
New every morn'  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

What love could remember  
No wrongs we have done  
Omniscient, all-knowing  
He counts not their sum  
Thrown into a sea  
Without bottom or shore  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

Praise the Lord  
His mercy is more

Stronger than darkness  
New every morn'  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

What patience would wait  
As we constantly roam  
What Father so tender  
Is calling us home  
He welcomes the weakest  
The vilest, the poor  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

Praise the Lord  
His mercy is more  
Stronger than darkness  
New every morn'  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

What riches of kindness  
He lavished on us  
His blood was the payment  
His life was the cost  
We stood 'neath a debt  
We could never afford  
And our sins they are many  
His mercy is more  
So much more

Praise the Lord  
His mercy is more (stronger)  
Stronger than darkness  
New every morn'  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

Praise the Lord  
His mercy is more  
Stronger than darkness  
New every morn'  
Our sins they are many  
His mercy is more

Our sins they are many  
 His mercy is more  
 Oh, our sins they are many  
 His mercy is more

### **Prayer for illumination**

We praise you, O God,  
 for the sun of righteousness rises  
 with healing in its wings.  
 May the warm and healing rays of the light,  
 our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 soften, heal, and transform us  
 through the power of your Holy Spirit  
 as your Word is proclaimed today. **Amen.**

### **Scripture**

#### **Luke 13:10-17**

**<sup>10</sup> Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." <sup>13</sup> And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. <sup>14</sup> But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." <sup>15</sup> Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? <sup>16</sup> And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" <sup>17</sup> As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.**

### **Sermon**

Could you imagine living for 18 years unable to stand up straight, to hold your head up and look at the world around you?

This is what life was like for the woman who wandered into the synagogue one sabbath day when Jesus was present teaching. She had lived for the past 18 years hunched over, unable to lift her head to see the sun, the moon, the stars or even the faces of the people around her. Over the past 18 years she had likely learned that looking up was difficult, perhaps she even thought it was impossible, maybe she believed that looking

too far forward was even a strain, she probably found it was much easier to just look down at her own feet, or maybe a few steps ahead.

She lived her life surrounded by people who could easily stand up straight, could easily look up, or down or anywhere around, she saw them when she swung her head side to side, looking at the people around her. Yet, she did not complain, or cause a fuss, she just carried on living the life she had been given until this particular sabbath day.

On this sabbath she walks into the synagogue and meets Jesus, and he lays his hands upon her, healing her, and her immediate response to stand up straight and praise God. She had not come seeking healing, but the grace and mercy of God had fallen upon her that day.

How many of us are like this woman in our lives?

The word used in our translation is disabling spirit, however in other bibles it is translated as an illness, sickness, or crippling. I can think of many of us who have experience these things in our lives, or perhaps are experiencing them right now in our life.

We have all seen people walking around us with shoulders hunched forward, eyes focused on the ground just slightly ahead of their feet. People who find it easier in this life to focus on the ground than to look up and meet the eyes of those around them.

I have seen many teenagers go through a stage of this as they are discovering their self-identify and self-worth. I have seen many homeless people like this as they enter into a shelter or food bank, I have seen addicts like this when they struggle to through off their addiction, and even the elderly walk like this as they feel the years weigh upon their shoulders.

This disabling spirit, illness or sickness comes in many different forms. It can be the result of a low self-esteem, abuse, guilt, sadness, anger, hatred, or any other negative emotion.

Have you ever seen and abused dog? It had its back hunched, it is unable to make eye contact, it tucks its tail between its legs. Human can do this too.

Depression, the lack of happiness or joy in one's life is perhaps the most common form of this. People who are depressed often look down at the ground, hunch their shoulders and shuffle their feet as they walk.

This is the life that the woman has lived for the past eighteen years of her life. Yet no one seems to have intervened. From the scripture we learn that the physical

manifestation of her disability comes from a spiritual attack. Jesus tells the ruler of the synagogue that the woman has been bound by Satan for 18 years.

The truth is that many people, including many of us, have been bound by Satan at some point in our lives. Bound by the self-doubt, bound by the attacks on our faith and bound by our sins and the impact they have on us and all those around us in our lives. All people live in a lost and broken world where sin is accepted, and Christian ways of living are challenged or outright rebelled against.

This woman has been bound by Satan in her life and has succumbed to his binding. She walks hunched over, looking at the ground ahead of her. She might occasionally see the smile on the face of a stranger she walks past her, but she may not see the kindness in it, instead she might think of it as ridicule, her self-esteem is low, and she begins to believe the world hates her almost as much as she is beginning to hate herself.

Think how difficult it can be for someone who is hunched over and not looking at the world around them to see past their current moment. It may seem impossible to move beyond the burden of pain, suffering, debt, turmoil, or sin in their lives. Which means the unhappiness with life just keeps compounding, stacking layer upon layer of depression and anger, becoming more and more self-focused, becoming more and more locked into the depression, that disabling spirit of Satan that binds them.

When people are unhappy and caught up in this cycle of self-absorption and self-hatred, when people are bowed over by the guilt and shame of the sins in their life, how is it possible for them to find the joy and happiness that Jesus has promised them, how is it possible for them to see the love and compassion that their Christian brothers and sisters want to share with them.

We all may know someone like this, especially after this pandemic, people who are trapped by their anxiety and depression. People who have allowed themselves to be convinced that they have no real value, in special skill or talent, people who question their very existence. They begin to avoid people because of their fear of rejection, they begin to give up doing things they are talented at because of the fear of judgement. They no longer want to go to church, read their bible or even believe in God because they have become so focused on their own predicament in the world. They have allowed their focus on self-dominate their lives and bring them into hell here on earth. Bound by Satan and his plans for them, losing the life that God has given them.

They often live like the woman in the story today, hunched over and shuffling along, never looking up just trying to make it through their days unnoticed. Yet on this particular sabbath day everything would change for the woman in the scripture.

We also do not know why she came to the synagogue on the Sabbath day when Jesus was teaching there. This woman for some unknown reason wanders into the synagogue,

a place where women were treated very unfairly in most instances, they could attend service, but not participate in the questions and discussion. Jesus is there teaching, and he sees this sad, hunched over woman and goes to her, he has compassion for her, he is not calculating, or considering the cost benefit analysis, he just goes to her because she is a fell human being trapped by the disabling spirit of Satan.

Jesus approaches this woman and calls her a 'daughter of Abraham' He equated her in the covenant of Abraham, a human being loved for and cared for by God the Father as his child. Jesus moves to her with compassion, most think of compassion as pity and that is nit what it is, compassion and pity are two very different things. Pity means we feel bad about something, pity means we do not thing that the situation is fair or just, but pity also means we can move on from that situation and do nothing to change it. Compassion quite literally means to do something 'with-suffering'. We cannot have compassion unless we suffer alongside the person in some way. Pity is an emotion; compassion is a call to action.

Jesus has compassion and he calls out to the woman and invites her into the circle of teaching. He acts, he invites, he shows his love for this woman who was living in the margins of society, hunched over and self-absorbed. He reaches out to her and heals her. Jesus physically acted, he physically reached out and touched this woman, something that would be unheard of in that time because of her ceremonial uncleanliness. He places his hands on the one he believed to be a child of God and she responds by standing up and praising God.

What shocks me in this story is the response of the leader of this synagogue. This man has just witnessed the healing of a woman, a child of God being brought back like one of the lost sheep and what does he do? He gets angry, he is furious that on of the rules of his Church has been broken, one of the traditions of man has been challenged. He is furious that Jesus was doing the Lord's work on the Sabbath, the Lords Day!

Jesus retorts with the hypocritical nature of the church's actions. To be willing to look after animals on the sabbath but not humans. Jesus is telling this synagogue leader and all those gathered they have become lost in the human rules and traditions of the church and lost touch with what the sabbath is really about.

So, what is the Sabbath really?

The Sabbath is prescribed in the Ten commandments that were given to the Israelites after being freed from slavery in Egypt. It is a day that was meant to help the nation to live in a way that honored God and built upon their relationship with God and one another.

However, through the centuries the religious leaders had so many legal requirements to the sabbath that it had become a burden for many people. The list of things which they



could do and could not do had gotten out of control. The sabbath had become a day of stress and burden and not the day of rest, delight, fellowship, worship, and celebration that it was intended to be by God.

There is some irony in this as this is precisely what the church is still doing today. Making up its own laws and rules, exceptions, and interpretations of the scripture to serve themselves and not in obedience of God's teachings.

Christianity is about loving God First, and then loving your neighbor as yourself, this means being freed from the disabling spirit of Satan and the bonds he places in our lives. Being Christian means being freed from self-absorption and self-pity, being freed from living the "stooped over life" and not getting caught up in living for society where it can be misinterpreted and misrepresented and can lead to the "bent over life."

In Mark Chapter 2, Jesus declares: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

In Isaiah Chapter 58 it says:

**Isaiah 58:13-14**

**<sup>13</sup> "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,  
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,  
and call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;  
if you honor it, not going your own ways,  
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;  
<sup>14</sup> then you shall take delight in the LORD,  
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;  
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

The Sabbath is meant to be a delight for Christians, not a burden. The Sabbath was made for our renewal, our new life, and to help us in our transformation, and in our healing. The Sabbath was created in order to set us free from the disabling spirit and bonds of Satan.

And as Christians, the Sabbath is something that we should be seeking not just on Sundays but every day of our lives. In Christ, every day is the day to stand up straight and with confidence and courage, shaking off the self-obsessed thoughts and doubts we

have. Every day is a day that we are called to live our lives with compassion for our brothers and sisters. Every day is a day that we are meant to heed the call of Christ on our lives. As Christians every day we have on this earth is a day of renewal and delight.

Today, tomorrow and every day, we are called by Christ, we are set free from the bondage of Satan and live into that life that is abundant and is only found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is time to stop living the "stooped over life", and instead stand up straight and tall and praise God with everything we have in our lives. It is time to stop letting the world shape us and instead be formed and renewed by the Lord. It is time to stop conforming to society and its ways and instead let ourselves be formed by the scripture.

Come to Jesus.

He is calling your name showing his compassion for what is going on in your lives.

Allow His love for you to transform your love for God, for neighbor and for yourself.

Allow Jesus to cause you to stand up straight!!!

And then praise God; in everything you do in thought, in word and in action, sharing the grace the mercy, the love and the compassion of Christ with all in this broken world!!!

Let us Pray,

**Neighborly Love, Service and Helpfulness**

Almighty and eternal God,  
 we are poor sinners  
 and stand under your righteous judgment.  
 With all our hearts  
 we thank you for taking all our guilt from us  
 and laying it on your dear Son Christ Jesus.  
 Graciously sustain us in faith  
 and govern us by your Holy Spirit,  
 that we may live according to your will,  
 in neighborly love, service and helpfulness,  
 and not give way to wrath or revenge,  
 that we may not incur your wrath  
 but always find in you a gracious Father;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one true God, now and forever. Amen.

*Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Trinity 22*

## 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

Emmanuel, God with us,  
the Magi followed the star to find you.  
Amazed, they gave gifts.  
We too are amazed by your presence among us,  
by the gift that you are to us.  
With joyful hearts, we bring you our gifts  
of time, of money, of ourselves.  
Use these and us to serve you and your world. **Amen.**

### Closing Hymn

#### Yet Not I, But through Christ in me

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

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Lord God, Loving God, gather us into your presence as we pray.  
 Silence our hearts and minds in these moments  
 so that we may listen for the movement of your Holy Spirit  
 who prays within us through our sighs too deep for words.

O God, we lay before you our thanks and our concerns  
as we remember those who have come to our attention through conversations  
or chance encounters this week.

We offer gratitude for moments of joy and goodness,  
and remembered pleasures stirred by your Spirit;

We remember all those whose situations are very close to our hearts today,  
those facing stress or sorrow,  
those challenged by pain or illness,  
those making a new beginning or searching for a new path.

We remember the things in the news lately that concern us deeply:  
the stress on the environment and worries about its future,  
the pressures on those who have lost jobs or cannot find work,  
the pain of those who meet discrimination or hatred in daily life,  
tensions among nations who threaten each other

And we remember one another and needs known and unknown in this community.  
Bless us as we make a new beginning together as summer turns to autumn.  
Show us the paths of ministry you are opening before us.  
We believe you hear our prayers and will be faithful to answer according to your will.  
We pray these words in the name of Jesus Christ, our lord and savior,  
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit  
As the one true God now and forever, amen.

### **Benediction**

Almighty God has given each of us everything we need  
to see our lives as a sheer gift from his hand:

The Father has created us and sustains our lives daily;  
the Son has paid for our sins and brought us new life;  
the Spirit keeps us in our Savior's love  
and empowers us to live for him.

All glory be to the triune God,  
the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

May his name be honored and adored,  
now and forevermore.

Beloved children of God:

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love for you,  
and keep you in his peace.

May you receive strength  
to grow in faith, hope, and love,  
to live with joy and delight,  
and to give God thanks and praise. **Amen.**