

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Stand Firm**  
**Proper 28**  
**Luke 21:5–19**

**Welcome**

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

As God has greeted us with his peace, so let us pass the peace of Christ to each other.

**Announcements**

- Study Club – Monday and Wednesdays 3-5 – Need MATH people
- Bible Study Groups - Monday and Wednesdays
- Youth Group – Fridays at 6pm
- Alpha Tuesdays at 6pm
- RightNow Media
- Bell Ringer Salvation Army
- Christmas Parade Volunteers

**Call to Worship**

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;  
**We will lift up joyous song and sing our praises.**

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it rejoice.  
**Let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord,**

For God will come to judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.  
**Let us join with all creation to praise the Lord! Let us worship God.**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

God of creation and compassion,  
You hear the cries of your people.  
You know our fear and despair.  
In your great love, you assure us that you walk with us in Christ Jesus.  
In this time of worship,  
we long to see your new heaven and new earth break through,

making your justice known and life fruitful for all your children.  
 We praise you for the hope you offer us in Christ Jesus.  
 We trust that you are at work in your church and in creation  
 so all that is broken will be made new.  
 Through our prayers and our praise,  
 strengthen our trust in your promised future, O God,  
 Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life.  
 In Jesus's wonderful and all-powerful name, we pray.  
 Amen

**Opening Hymn #350: "To God Be the Glory"**

To God be the glory, who great things he has done!  
 God so loved he the world! freely sending the Son,  
 who yielded his life an atonement for sin,  
 and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord,  
 Let the earth hear God's voice!  
 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
 Let the people rejoice!  
 O come to the Father through Jesus the Son  
 and give God the glory, who great things has done!

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
 To every believer the promise of God;  
 That when the offender, repenting, believes,  
 Through Jesus' atonement, full pardon receives! [Refrain]

Great things God has taught us, great things God has done,  
 and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,  
 but purer and higher and greater will be  
 our wonder, our gladness, when Jesus we see. [Refrain]

**Call to Confession**

In repentance and rest is your salvation,  
 in quietness and trust is your strength,  
 but you would have none of it.  
 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;  
 therefore he will rise up to show you compassion.  
 For the LORD is a God of justice.  
 Blessed are all who wait for him!

Let us confess our sin before God and one another

**Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God,  
 you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you.  
 We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy.  
 We have not loved you with a pure heart,  
 nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves.  
 We have not done justice, loved kindness,  
 or walked humbly with you, our God.  
 Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness.  
 In your great compassion,  
 cleanse us from our sin.  
 Create in us a clean heart, O God,  
 and renew a right spirit within us.  
 Do not cast us from your presence,  
 or take your Holy Spirit from us.  
 Restore to us the joy of your salvation  
 and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit  
 through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news!  
 Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
 whose sin is covered.  
 Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,  
 and in whose spirit there is no deceit  
 Know that in Jesus,  
 God embraces you, forgives you,  
 and strengthens you to live a renewed life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**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.**

**Music Ministry: "Nothing Left to Say" by Choir**

**Responsive Reading**

**Question 93. How are God's forgiveness of our sins and our forgiveness of others related?**

It is exceedingly difficult to forgive. Yet when we are forgiven by God, and helped by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to forgive others. We are to forgive even as we are forgiven. The Christian community is called to be an oasis of forgiveness in the contemporary desert of resentment and rage, vengeance and hatred.  
Mt 18:21, Mt 6:12, Lk 6:27-28, Lk 23:34

**Children’s Hymn #378: “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the Morning”**

Jesus, Jesus,  
Jesus in the morning,  
Jesus in the noontime;  
Jesus, Jesus,  
Jesus when the sun goes down!

Love Him, Love Him,  
Love Him in the morning,  
Love Him in the noontime;  
Love Him, Love Him,  
Love Him when the sun goes down!

Serve Him, Serve Him,  
Serve Him in the morning,  
Serve Him in the noontime;  
Serve Him, Serve Him,  
Serve Him when the sun goes down!

**Children’s Lesson**

**Prayer for illumination**  
**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Scripture**

**Luke 21:5-19**

**Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple**

<sup>5</sup> And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, <sup>6</sup> “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” <sup>7</sup> And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” <sup>8</sup> And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. <sup>9</sup> And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

### **Jesus Foretells Wars and Persecution**

**<sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup>There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup>But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. <sup>13</sup>This will be your opportunity to bear witness. <sup>14</sup>Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, <sup>15</sup>for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup>You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. <sup>17</sup>You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup>By your endurance you will gain your lives.**

### **Sermon**

Precious Lord, take my hand,  
Lead me on, let me stand;  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
Through the storm, through the night,  
Lead me on to the light;  
Take my hand, precious Lord,  
Lead me home.

The man who penned these words was Thomas Dorsey, born in rural Georgia in 1889. He was raised in a religious family, but Christian music was not his focus in early life, instead he was drawn to the barrel houses and blues clubs, where he became well known for his ability to play both jazz and blues as well as to compose new music.

He moved to Chicago to further his musical career in 1919, and he struggled in that city. Eventually getting married in 1925 to Nettie Harper, who joined him as his wardrobe designer on tour. Life was hectic and difficult as they young couple tried to find their way and survive in Chicago years leading up to the great depression. In 1926 Dorsey became depressed, he said at points he was even considering suicide to escape the difficulties of this world. During this time, he played in the bars and clubs during the week and in his church on Sunday mornings. The truth was that the church alone could not sustain him and his family, so he did what he could.

However, in 1928, while at church with his Sister-in-law he rediscovered his real passion for God and vowed to devote his life to God and furthering his kingdom through his music from that day forth. He brought his talents from jazz and blues fully to the church, he began seriously writing and composing and is considered by many the father of Christian Gospel as we know it today, composing roughly 1000 songs before his death.

His life was not easy, it was filled with challenges, troubles, tribulations, and temptations. Yet through all the realities of life in this world Thomas Dorsey believed that he could always find joy in the Lord and believed it was his call to stand firm in his faith and bring the joy of the Lord to as many people as possible through his music.

A time of trial, temptations, and tribulation is what Jesus is speaking about in the scripture today. Jesus is teaching his disciples about the end of times, the truths of his second coming that are revealed in the book of Revelation. He is going to teach us a little about when it will happen, what will happen and what we should know about that day.

Jesus begins by telling his disciples of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, but he is not just speaking about the destruction of the physical temple. He is speaking about something that is a lot bigger and more impactful than the loss of a building. The temple itself was huge, a true marvel of engineering and beauty that stood in the heart of the city. There were huge stones which were moved into place and perfectly resting upon one another with no need for mortar or any other bonding material. Inset to these stones were gems and golden inlays, said to be so reflective of sunlight that it gave the temple the image of the rising sun when people came towards the city. Others claimed that the city could be seen from miles away as it glowed against the land that surrounded it, a sea of light in the desert. Each of its great courtyards were separated by large beautiful wooden doorways filled with carvings, gems and gold. The temple stood as a testimony to the power of the Jewish people here on earth and the God they worshipped.

The temple in Jerusalem was the spiritual center of Judaism, so it was not just physically huge, it was also spiritually huge. The Holy of Holies, God's home on Earth sat at the very center of the temple. It was the only place that people could be physically close to their God, and if you were lucky enough to be a high priest you could stand in the room right beside where God resided here on Earth. The temple in Jerusalem was the central meeting point of all of the major festivals, and because of that it was a place that all Jewish men of age 12 and older were expected to attend on the festivals. This was the center of Judaism and people all dreamed of the day that they would get to visit the Temple of Beauty in Jerusalem.

So, when Jesus mentions its destruction, he shocks the disciples.

**Luke 21:7**

**<sup>7</sup> And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"**

They need to know when this will happen because of the far-reaching impact it will have in not only the people of the region but in Judaism as a whole. The destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem resulted in exile to Babylon, so they fear that this second destruction of the temple will result in another exile or worse for their faith. This holds true for us today as well, it is why so many people devote their whole lives into examining the symbolism and signs in the book of Revelation, trying to figure out exactly when it will happen so that they can be prepared for the

second coming of Christ and the end of the world we know. They want to know so that they can live their lives the way they want now and be spiritually ready when Christ does come.

However, Jesus does not tell the disciples when the temple will fall the same way he does not tell us of the day, time, or even year of his second coming. Instead, he gives us a description of what will be happening in the world as this time approaches.

**Luke 21:8-12**

**<sup>8</sup> And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them. <sup>9</sup> And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once."**

**<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup> But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake."**

Does what Jesus is describing in this scripture sound familiar to anyone? Can anyone see these things happening in the world today? We all can probably find things which would match this description just in the last few years. Truthfully every generation of Christians has been convinced that they are living in the end of times. Both World War I, which was described early on as the war to end all wars, and World War II were thought to be signs of the coming Lord. Now everyone is convinced if there was ever a World War III it would be the apocalyptic war, especially since it would likely involve nuclear arms.

All throughout history Christianity has faced challenges, however in the post-Christian world we are living in today, we are seeing the whole of society move further and further away of the teachings of God in the scriptures. Pastors who truthfully proclaim Gods word are becoming fewer and fewer, because the world is making it more and more difficult to preach the word, it used to be that a Pastor had to worry about facing fines and imprisonment if they preached the word while on mission, but with the direction the law is moving in North America that could be a reality here within our lifetimes. The focus of many churches has shifted from God and his Word to self-satisfaction and personal goals, making people feel like there are good people and deserve more in this world. More and more professing Christians are seeking out churches and Pastors who tell them what they want to hear, about themselves and their lifestyles rather than God's Word as it is written. Looking for ways to make God fit into their lives instead of letting the Word of God change them into who He is calling for them to be. There are always examples of floods, famines, heat waves and cold spells that destroy economies and cripple nations, making it hard to provide for the basic needs of people.

When ever we look at the news from the world around us, we see all of these things that Jesus warns of appearing. We could spend hours and hours discussing each of them and if they are a

sign of the second coming, if they match what is spoken of here and in the book of Revelation, but that is not what is important for us to understand. We will never know precisely when any of this will happen and when it is the final sign of the second coming, Jesus is telling us this because he wants us to always be ready for his second coming. Instead, we should be focused on what He is telling us to do.

**Luke 21:13–15**

**<sup>13</sup> This will be your opportunity to bear witness. <sup>14</sup> Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, <sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.**

Jesus tells us that we are to bear witness to him in the midst of all of these things happening in the world. In the trials, temptations, tribulations, in the suffering and chaos that we will experience in the world, in the midst of it, not after, but in the very middle of it, we are to be glorifying the Lord our God and bearing witness to him in our thoughts, words and deeds.

This is an important point for Christians to understand. Many of us are good at giving time to the church, tithing, attending service, reading our bibles, and praying when things are going good in our lives, or even when things become a little difficult. But Jesus is telling us that we are to be doing all of this when things are at their worst in our lives. We are called to bear testimony to God's importance in our lives both when things are good and when they are as far from good as we can imagine. When things in our life cannot seem to get any worse, when we just want to give up or do anything we can to get away from the life situation we are in, that is when we are called to bear our testimony to the Lord in our lives in all of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

How can we do this, how can we bear testimony to the Lord when our lives are in Chaos. We all know how to do this when things go well, we can happily praise the Lord, happily give him thanks for the blessings we have in our lives, the healing we have received, the things he has delivered us from and our eternal salvation. When our life is going well, we can easily find the words to express how glad we are to have received the Lord and be saved from the slavery of sin in our lives. How do we find those same words when our life is in turmoil and chaos?

Jesus tells us that we do not need to worry about our words. He will provide us for the words that we need. We just need to carry on living faithfully, focused on him as the center of our lives and that he will provide, do not get overly troubled by what is happening in the world around us. All of the wars, the famines, the false teachers, the churches falling away, the accusations of persecutions that we witness in the world are going to happen, and there is nothing we can do to stop them. Instead in the midst of all of these things we are called to stand firm in our faith and stay focused on Jesus. Stand firm and serve the Lord in our lives in the chaos of the world that surrounds us each day.

**Luke 21:16**



**<sup>16</sup> You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death.**

We can imagine being able to stay true to God in the chaos of the world, however, it will not just be in the world outside, it will also be much closer for many of us. Jesus tells us that we will be betrayed, not just betrayed, but betrayed by those people who we hold close and are dear to our hearts. We will be betrayed by our parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends. People who we have given parts of our hearts will betray us because of our faith. Some of us may have already experienced this, they may have strained or even broken relationships in their lives because of their faith. A war, a famine or a false prophet may not have much direct impact on our daily lives, but this kind of betrayal will definitely have an impact. It will cause a chaos and loss in your life in ways that we can only begin to imagine and understand.

This betrayal is personal, because it is those who you love most on this planet that will betray you because of your faith, Jesus says that their betrayal may even result in our death. As we sit here in this sanctuary that is something we may find hard to understand, it may even seem farfetched, but it is very much a reality in many countries around the world. In some places there are rewards for turning Christians into the local governing authorities. In these countries the Christians are usually imprisoned or re-educated in camps, but if they refuse to give up their faith it often ends with their execution. So, while this may not seem like a reality to us today, right now, who knows what will happen in the future. Today, we might lose family, friends, and co-workers because of our faith and adherence to Christ and his teachings in the scripture, in the future the cost of our faith could be much higher.

**Luke 21:17**

**<sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all for my name's sake. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup> By your endurance you will gain your lives.**

As our societies embrace the ways of the world, as they embrace their sinful nature they will naturally turn against God and against anyone who holds to His ways. This is happening, Christians are already becoming the outsider, they are no longer the social norm in this broken world. Many of the moral and ethical teachings of the scripture, many of the teachings about sin and repentance go against the teachings of the world today. This is a reality that we need to both understand and live within, we are going to be judged, and at times hated because we stand firm in the teachings of the scripture. There will be times when we will feel the pressure to hide our faith because of the way Christians are viewed, and once again these are the times and places where we are to stand firm in our faith and bear witness to God in our lives.

Because even in these dark, chaotic, and difficult times of our lives, even when we are in the midst of destruction, betrayal, and loss, we will be given the opportunity to shine the light of Christ out into the world and by doing so we stand firm in our faith and our eternal salvation when Christ comes in his final Judgement.

How are we to bear our testimony when we feel pain, when we feel disruption in our lives, when we experience separation, or sadness or frustration, when we feel powerless, and hopeless and full of despair, when we experience grief or sorrow, and when we wonder why God lets bad things happen in this world? We do it by trusting in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, by standing firm and being a living testimony to our faith, by taking our troubles and laying them at His feet in prayer. We stand firm and place all of our faith in Christ and live accordingly, adhering to the teachings of the scripture, staying true to our praise and worship and prayer. Our life becomes our testimony in action not just words. We boldly speak of the greatness of God even in the midst of the chaos and suffering. Thomas Dorsey was a man who knew and understood this, his gospel music was meant to lift people's hearts to God in worship in the midst of trouble, loss, and suffering. Even when he experienced these things in his own life, he used them as an inspiration to joyfully proclaim the greatness of God to others.

In August of 1932, he left his pregnant wife at home while he went to be the featured artist at a revival meeting taking place in St. Louis. This was a chance for him to proclaim the Glory of God to thousands of people and to share his love of the Lord with them as he helps raise their eyes to the Lord as they sang their praise and worship. He was also hopeful that this opportunity would provide him a better living now that his little family was growing.

After the first night of the revival, he received a telegram, on it were only 4 words, 'Your wife just died.' Dorsey raced home as fast as he could and learned that his wife had given birth to his son and then died quickly afterwards due to complications experienced in the birth. He was awoken the next morning with more devastating news, his son had died as well. Dorsey had his wife and his son buried together in the same casket after which he withdrew to his home to mourn full of sorrow and agony. He refused to play or compose any music.

One day, while in the very midst of his agony and despair, Dorsey said that he found himself seated in front of his piano and a sense of peace washed through him. He said he heard a melody in his head that he had never heard before and he began to play it on that old piano. That was the night he recorded his testimony for all the world to hear, in the very midst of his pain and suffering:

Precious Lord, take my hand,  
Lead me on, let me stand;  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
Through the storm, through the night,  
Lead me on to the light;  
Take my hand, precious Lord,  
Lead me home.

Thomas Dorsey in the midst of his suffering, his pain, his agony, gave his testimony to the Lord and his hope which rested in Jesus Christ alone. Great suffering will change some people, it will defeat others – but for those who stand firm in their faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone it will give them peace and eternal Joy when they enter the kingdom of heaven. So, stand firm in

your faith, go forth and be a living testimony to the Glory of God in times of joy and in times of suffering.

Let us Pray,

### **For Mercy and Grace**

O God, our true Life,  
 in whom and by whom all things live,  
 you command us to seek you,  
 and you are ready to be found.  
 You command us to knock,  
 and open when we do so.  
 To know you is life,  
 to serve you is freedom,  
 to enjoy you is a kingdom,  
 to praise you is the joy and happiness of the soul.  
 I praise, bless, and adore you,  
 I worship you, I glorify you, I give thanks to you for your great glory.  
 I humbly ask you to remain with me,  
 to reign in me,  
 to make my heart your holy temple,  
 a fit habitation for your Divine majesty.  
 Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible,  
 preserve the work of your own hands,  
 your people who trust in your mercy alone for safety and protection.  
 Guard me with the power of your grace,  
 here and in all places,  
 now and at all times, forevermore. Amen.

*Source: Augustine of Hippo*

### **Music Ministry: "10,000 Reasons" by Rob Noyes**

### **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. [standrewsperthoffering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewsperthoffering@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**  
**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Closing Hymn: “Worthy, You are Worthy”**

Worthy, You are worthy  
 King of kings, Lord of lords  
 You are worthy  
 Worthy, You are worthy  
 King of kings, Lord of lords  
 I worship You

Holy You are holy  
 King of kings, Lord of lords  
 You are holy  
 Holy, You are holy  
 King of kings, Lord of lords  
 I worship You

Jesus, You are Jesus  
 King of kings, Lord of lords  
 You are Jesus  
 Jesus, You are Jesus  
 King of kings, Lord of lords  
 I worship You

**Prayers for the People**

**Pastoral Prayer**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
 we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks  
 for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
 to us and to all whom you have made.  
 We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
 and all the blessings of this life,  
 but above all for your immeasurable love  
 in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
 And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies  
 that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
 not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
 by giving up ourselves to your service,

and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

**Benediction**

The love of God the Father, the faithful creator,  
the peace of Christ, the wounded healer,  
the joy of the challenging Spirit,  
the hope of the Three in One  
surround and encourage you  
today, tonight, and forever.