

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, July 2nd, 2023
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Servant Evangelism
Proper 8
Matthew 10:40-42

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

God, our Creator,
from nothing you made our world.
**You formed us, love us,
and give us all that we need.**

God, our Redeemer,
you rescued us from sin.
**You have given us new life
and hope of healing to the world.**

God, our Comforter,
you are with us always.
**You comfort us, renew us,
and guide us into your truth.**

Almighty God, for your gracious love for us,
we praise you. **Amen**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Loving God,
we come to you in worship and thanksgiving.
You are greater than we can understand;
open our eyes that we may see the wonderful truths
you have shown to us in Jesus.
You are more loving than our hearts can respond to;
help us to give ourselves to you in worship
so that we learn what you want us to be.
You are wiser than we can know;
still our minds as we worship you

so that we can understand the things you are saying to us.
 Loving God, in Jesus
 you chose to come to the world in humility.
 You chose the path the world saw as foolish.
 You used what the world considered weak.
 We worship and adore you. Amen

Opening Hymn #682: “Just As I Am, Without One Plea” (V 1,2,4)

Just as I am, without one plea,
 but that thy blood was shed for me,
 and that thou biddest me come to thee,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
 with many a conflict, many a doubt,
 fightings and fears within, without,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
 wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
 because thy promise I believe,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

**Almighty God, we confess how hard it is to be your people.
 You have called us to be the church,
 to continue the mission of Jesus Christ to our lonely and confused world.
 Yet we acknowledge we are more apathetic than active,
 isolated than involved, callous than compassionate,
 obstinate than obedient, legalistic than loving.
 Gracious Lord, have mercy upon us and forgive our sins.
 Remove the obstacles preventing us
 from being your representatives to a broken world.
 Awaken our hearts to the promised gift of your indwelling Spirit.
 This we pray in Jesus’ powerful name. Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

There is no condemnation
 for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 For the law of the Spirit

of life in Christ Jesus
 has set you free from the law of sin and death.
 Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.
 The old life has gone;
 a new life has begun.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever. Amen.**

Responsive Reading

Psalm 89:15-18

¹⁵ Blessed are the people who know the festal shout,
 who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face,

¹⁶ **who exult in your name all the day
 and in your righteousness are exalted.**

¹⁷ For you are the glory of their strength;
 by your favor our horn is exalted.

¹⁸ **For our shield belongs to the LORD,
 our king to the Holy One of Israel.**

Children's Hymn #773: "Jesus Bids Us Shine"

Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light,
 like a little candle burning in the night.
 In the world is darkness, so we must shine,
 you in your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, first of all for him;
 well he sees and knows it if our light grows dim.
 He looks down from heaven to see us shine,
 you in your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, then, for all around;
 many kinds of darkness in this world abound:
 sin and want and sorrow; so we must shine,
 you in your small corner, and I in mine.

Children's Lesson

Prayer for illumination (Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

Matthew 10:40-42

⁴⁰ "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹ The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Sermon

One of the most common questions you will be asked as a Christian by non-Christians is, "Why are you a Christian? What's in it for you?"

See for many non-Christians and even nominal Christians they are focused on what they get out of their faith. They think of church, Jesus, and God as kind of a department store, where they can go and get what they want and then head home and live their lives the way they want.

Christianity, being a true faithful follower of Christ is not about what you get out of following Christ. Instead, it is about being an active participant in God's family working together to bring God to the people around them in this fallen world.

One of the biggest mistakes that the church has been making for years now is focusing on getting people into the pews. Many modern churches operate under the premise that as long as someone says a 'sinners' prayer' and comes to church that they are saved. According to many Churches being forgiven of our sins is the most important aspect of our faith.

The doctrine of salvation as it is taught and understood by many, is that we are saved by faith alone, and this is an absolute truth.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

We are saved by our faith, and unfortunately this is where many people and many churches end their understanding of what it means to be a Christian. This is why we have so many nominal Christians, people who may come to church on a regular basis or may not have set foot in a church since the day that they were baptized, because they think all it takes to be saved is to believe in Jesus and say a few words and be sprinkled or dunked in some water. This is one of the reasons why we have so many people and churches who are claiming Christianity and

teaching things that go against the teachings of the Bible, because they have this over simplified idea of what faith means.

Yet if we go back to the scriptures, we will find that true faith in Christ, really being one of his followers is much more. Last week we talked about what it means to bear your cross, to die to yourself and your pride and your ego. Jesus wanted his followers to understand that being part of the kingdom of God meant being set apart from the ways of the world. Jesus spoke of the transformation of character, the transformation of heart, ways in which we would change from being worldly focused into heavenly focused in our lives as we grew in faith and obedience.

James speaks about this through his entire book of the Bible, that we are called to have works that go alongside of our faith. When we are true followers of Christ, we begin to understand that the good things that we do for others do not earn us salvation, but those good works are a product of our salvation. This is the transformation that Jesus spoke of in his teachings.

Martin Luther said it this way, **'It is not faith or works, it is faith that works.'**

Jesus teaches us in this bit of scripture that we read today that there are rewards for participating in the work of God's kingdom here on earth. Faith, true belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour is all that it takes to get into heaven. That is the grace of God, however, the Christian life is not simply about getting into heaven, it is about being one of God's faithful servants while we live out our time here on earth and we carry out the great commission in our lives.

Something that Paul wrote to the Corinthians reminds us of the importance of the way we live our lives as Christians.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

There is indeed a reward for being a faithful worker in God's kingdom here on earth. However, we can also be doing those good works for the wrong reasons. In James, we are told that the good works we do are a result of our love of God, that would be building with gold, silver, and precious metals. If we are carrying out our task of the great commission simply because of our love of God and desire to be obedient to him, there will be a reward in heaven awaiting us.

On the other hand, there are some who are saved, who do their good works in hopes of gaining recognition, or being noticed, in some cases it is even for their own personal gain or benefit, or

even just to try to make themselves seem to be better followers than they actually are. If we are doing our work in God's kingdom for the wrong reasons, we will have salvation, but our reward might be lost.

In Romans Paul wrote,

Romans 6:19-23

I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Those of us who have been saved need to recognize that we have been changed. We used to serve a master that was leading our lives on a path of death and destruction, yet after we have received salvation, we serve a God who gives us new life. We have been set free from a life of slavery to sin and now serve a master who seeks to reward us for our lives lived in service of him.

And the benefits and rewards of faithfully following and serving God are not just heavenly, some of them are in the here and now. When we are obedient to God in this world, we begin to live a life of righteousness and holiness. When we begin to pick up our cross and follow him, we die to self and begin to care less and less about the judgement of this world, bringing us the peace of Christ in a world that is filled with judgement and chaos.

God rewards us for being faithful, and the wage of sin is death. Think about that for a moment.

Wages are something we receive. Wages are something we earn, something we deserve for the things we have done. When I go to work, I do the work, I expect my wage.

Rewards are different. Rewards are something you get even if you do not earn them or deserve them. Rewards are a gift.

The Book of Revelation says,

Revelation 22:17

17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

This is the Good news that Christians are called to share with the world. We do not get what we deserve, instead we are given a free gift through the grace of God and it is eternal life itself. Salvation is a reward, not a wage and it is something that we could never earn no matter how much we did or how hard we tried.

The book of Hebrews teaches us that,

Hebrews 6:9-12

9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. 10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

God sees the works we do, and we have an inheritance that has been promised to us for showing that same love that God has shown us to others. We are called to live out the great commission, by loving God first and then by loving our neighbor as ourselves and by loving and praying for our enemies.

We show that love for God and neighbor in the way that we live every day and in everything that we do. We show this love by treating every person we meet, family, friend, stranger or even enemy as someone that God loves and someone that we should love.

This means we reach out to the lost, we share the truth of who God is with them and we care about them, because God cares for them. It means, we acknowledge that God wants to bring all his people back to himself and he has given us the task of communicating that in our lives through the great commission. The Church is meant to be a place where the Spirit of Christ is manifested, and Christians are meant to be people who work with one another to express the love of God in word and deed.

And the message that the church proclaims is not one of just salvation but one of transformation. The gospel proclaims that we can be freed from the slavery to sin that we are born into, that we can be freed from our desires and our weaknesses through the power of the Holy Spirit being active in us. That we are so much more than just a forgiven people, we are people who have been reborn and are being remade in the image of the one we follow, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians need to be willing to admit we are not perfect, we are all broken, we are still dealing with our sinful nature, but we are growing daily in our ability to understand and obey the kind of life that we are being called to live. We need to be willing to share with others about the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and how it can transform people so that they can also be used for God's purpose and to expand his kingdom here on earth.

Christians need to communicate that faith is wanting to have a relationship with God, not just wanting him to forgive your sins so that you can get into heaven. Faith is about change, faith is about obedience, faith is about picking up your cross and dying to self. Faith is about recognizing that your life belongs to God and that you cannot live your life any way you want.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Says

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Knowing our lives belong to God is something that all Christians struggle within their lives. We are all constantly facing the desires of the flesh, the things we know are sinful and that we should not do, but still do. Every Christian is in a constant state of change, as the Holy Spirit does it works in them, bringing them to an understanding of their sin and then helping them to purge that sin from their lives, giving them the freedom and peace that is found in Christ alone as it does its work in them.

This is why we are called to bring the knowledge of who Christ is to all those around us, so others can experience the transformation of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 10: 42

⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

This is how we carry out the great commission in our lives. It is commonly referred to as 'servant evangelism'. It means the showing of God's love through the way that we care for and love others. Simple acts of kindness sometimes have a much stronger and much more far-reaching impact that even the strongest message of the Gospel that is spoken, or the best argument for believing in God that can be given.

Sharing a cup of water means more than sharing a drink or even a meal with someone. Jesus is instructing us that we are to share ourselves with others. To share ourselves and to share the message of who God is in our lives in practical ways.

Every day in this world there are people who are looking for help, sometimes it is simple, sometimes it is more complex. Sometimes helping people has become part of our everyday routine, sometimes it is part of our job, if we are lucky, it is both an act of kindness and a labor of love.

The truth is that there are opportunities in front of us each and every day to show the love of Christ in the things we do. The things we do in God's name do not have to be extraordinary or complex, they can be everyday actions, things that we do not even consider evangelism, that can often show people more of the truth about who God is and what he can do.

When you love Christ, you begin to live for him and that means that no matter how simple or complex, how ordinary, or unique we will always have an opportunity to show our love of God to others by simple acts of kindness.

Giving a cup of water means showing God's love through our actions in this world with family, friends and even enemies. It is not based on who we are, but on who the Holy Spirit is transforming us into. The Holy Spirit is there with us, he gives us strength when we are weak, comforts us when we are experiencing pain or loss. He is there to help us when we fail. The reward of the gift of grace, God's love is with us always and the blessing of that gift is what we need to share with others.

We do this by sharing in the lives of others. When we see someone struggling, we do not simply offer to pray for them, we sit with them and listen, we offer our help, we offer a shoulder. Sometimes it can be as simple as carrying in a bag of groceries or holding a door open for them, things which once were considered common Courtises which are now lost in our culture.

These simple acts of kindness done for strangers are ways in which we show God's love and grace on us to the world.

Offering a cup of cold water to a stranger, is something we think is trivial in our modern world, but at Jesus's time it meant making a simple sacrifice, going out to the well and drawing a fresh cold cup of water took time and effort that would not otherwise have been needed.

The simple acts of kindness through which we show others God in our lives and theirs, means at times we might be slightly inconvenienced, means at times we may give up things. But it is through these things, which any of us can do, that we ensure our reward in heaven and serve our God as his Salt and Light here on earth.

Let us pray,

Our High Priest and Shepherd

We thank you with our whole heart,
 O beloved Father,
 for the precious blood of your dear Son,
 which he shed for our sake,
 and by which you daily cleanse, quicken, and sanctify us
 in your holy Church,
 and make us partakers of your divine nature.
 We thank you for the great and unspeakable love,
 though we were not worthy of it,

when you redeemed us by your own Son,
 who is our High priest and Mediator,
 the true Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep of his flock,
 who now sits on your right hand
 and intercedes for us.

O good and faithful God, Friend of all mankind,
 give us your grace and your great compassion,
 that we may praise you with your Son and the Holy Spirit
 in every act of our lives evermore.
 Amen.

Hymn #707: "More Love to Thee"

More love to thee, O Christ, more love to thee:
 hear thou the prayer I make on bended knee;
 this is my earnest plea: more love, O Christ, to thee,
 more love to thee, more love to thee!

Through all that life may bring joy, grief or pain,
 work out thy perfect plan: true heavenly gain;
 only create in me more love, O Christ, to thee,
 more love to thee, more love to thee!

Communion

Invitation to the Table

As we prepare to celebrate holy communion, let us remember that Scripture calls us to examine ourselves before God. We are taught that eating and drinking unworthily brings judgment upon ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28-29). Let us therefore ask God for the proper spirit in which to celebrate the sacrament.

Almighty God, before whom can be neither secret thought nor hidden deed, grant us your Spirit that we may know our hearts, our lives, and our inmost thoughts as you know them.

Grant us your grace that we may repent sincerely of all sin, find peace with you through our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow in assurance of salvation in him.

May the celebration of our Savior's infinite love in his redeeming death bring joy to us and glory to you.

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you;
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts;

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

With joy we praise you, gracious Father,
 for you have created heaven and earth,
 made us in your image, and kept covenant with us—
 even when we fell into sin.

We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord,
 who by his life, death, and resurrection
 opened to us the way of everlasting life.
 Therefore we join our voices
 with all the saints and angels and the whole creation
 to proclaim the glory of your name.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.**

We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature.

We praise you for forming us in your image and calling us to be your people.

We thank you that you did not abandon us in our rebellion against your
 love, but sent prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation.

Above all we thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to deliver us from
 the way of sin and death by the obedience of his life, by his suffering upon
 the cross, and by his resurrection from the dead. We praise you that he now
 reigns with you in glory and ever lives to pray for us.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit, who leads us into truth, defends us in
 adversity, and out of every people unites us into one holy church.

Therefore with the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth we
 worship and glorify you, God most holy.

Let us together confess the faith of the church at all times and in
 all places:

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. AMEN.

Communion

Congregation of Jesus Christ, the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him and trust in him alone for their salvation. All who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him as Lord, are now invited to come with gladness to the table of the Lord.

Lord, our God, we ask that you send your Holy Spirit so that this bread and cup may be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we and all your saints be united with Christ and remain faithful in hope and love. Gather your whole church, O Lord, into the glory of your kingdom.

Breaking of the bread

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
We who are many are one body, for we all share the same loaf.

Taking of the bread

Take, eat, remember, and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins

Distribution of the cup

The cup for which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

The cup which we drink is our participation in the blood of Christ.

Drinking of the cup

Take, drink, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

Prayer after Communion

We thank you, our Lord, for the hope this meal gives us,
that Jesus will return as triumphant King,
that the dead will be raised,
and that all people will stand before his judgment.
We face that day without fear,
for you, our Judge, are our Savior.
May our daily lives of service aim
for the moment when the Son will present his people to the Father
and God will be shown to be true, holy, and gracious.
With the whole creation we wait for the purifying fire of judgment.
For then we will see you face to face.
You will heal our hurts,
end our wars,
and make the crooked straight.
Then we will join in the new song to the Lamb without blemish,
who made us a kingdom and priests.
You, our God, will be all in all, righteousness and peace will flourish,
everything will be made new, and
every eye will see at last that our world belongs to God!
Hallelujah! Lord Jesus. Amen.

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 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 #749: “Be Still, My Soul” (V 1,2,4)

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;
 bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
 leave to thy God to order and provide;
 in every change God faithful will remain.
 Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
 through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
 to guide the future wisely, as the past.
 Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
 all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
 Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
 the voice that ruled them here on earth below.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
 when we shall be forever with the Lord,
 when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
 sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
 Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
 all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Pastoral Prayer

With you, wondrous God, we move from this time of worship.
 Thank you for calling us to worship you and for accepting
 our praises as a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to you.
 Thank you, O God, that your Word came to us in power,
 inspired by your Holy Spirit.
 Thank you for nourishing us with your Word and Spirit
 and strengthening us with your grace for the days ahead.
 Thank you for listening to prayers that rose to you from humble hearts.
 Thank you for surrounding us with brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ
 who love us, share our triumphs and disappointments,
 and support us in times of need.
 Thank you that our offering may provide relief
 for those who suffer in poverty of body or spirit.
 In the week ahead, O God, may we turn each moment of joy into praise,
 and may we cling to your promise in times of suffering.
 Guide us, O God, so that we can obey you.
 Make your light shine through us

so that others will see our good deeds and glorify you.
Fill our lives with love for you, O God,
and for the world that so desperately needs its Savior, in whom we pray. Amen

Benediction

May our Lord Jesus Christ,
the one who came with grace and truth,
also fill your hearts with grace and truth,
as you serve him in the days ahead.
And may the joy of the Lord—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—
be your strength. Amen