

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, June 25th, 2023
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Sword
Proper 7
Matthew 10:32-39

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

In your wisdom, O God, you call us here to worship you.

We gather, alive to the Word of God.

You call us to be fully alive with your life abundant,
ready to listen and respond with heart, soul, strength, and mind.

We listen, alive to the Word of God.

You call us to be always watchful for your Word of wisdom,
sometimes startling and unexpected,
sometimes still and quiet,
but always dwelling among us.

We watch and wait for the Word of God.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

We give thanks to you, God our Father,
for mercy that reaches out,
for patience that waits our returning,
for your love that is ever ready
to welcome sinners.

We praise you that in Jesus Christ
you came to us with forgiveness,
and that, by your Holy Spirit,
you move us to repent
and receive your love.

Though we are sinners,
you are faithful and worthy of all praise.

O gracious and holy God,
give us diligence to seek you,

wisdom to perceive you,
 and patience to wait for you.
 Grant us, O God,
 a mind to meditate on you,
 eyes to behold you,
 ears to listen for your Word,
 a heart to love you,
 and a life to proclaim you,
 through the power of the Spirit
 of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn #485: “Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”

Saviour, like a shepherd lead us:
 much we need your tender care;
 in your pleasant pastures feed us;
 for our use your folds prepare:
 blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
 you have bought us; yours we are.
 Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
 you have bought us, yours we are.

We are yours; in love befriend us;
 be the guardian of our way;
 keep your flock from sin, defend us;
 seek us when we go astray:
 blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
 hear your children when we pray.
 Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
 hear your children when we pray.

Let us always seek your favour;
 let us always do your will.
 Jesus Christ our only Saviour,
 with yourself our spirits fill:
 blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
 you have loved us; love us still.
 Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
 you have loved us; love us still.

Call to Confession

The proof of God’s amazing love is this:
 While we were sinners, Christ died for us.
 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness,
 so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Trusting in God's faithfulness and compassion,
let us confess our sin before God and one another

Prayer of Confession

**Holy and merciful God,
in your presence we confess
our sinfulness, our shortcomings,
and our offenses against you.
You alone know how often we have sinned
in wandering from your ways,
in wasting your gifts,
in forgetting your love.
Have mercy on us, O Lord,
for we are ashamed and sorry
for all we have done to displease you.
Forgive our sins,
and help us to live in your light
and walk in your ways,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

Our God pardons our sins and forgives our disobedience.
Our God does not stay angry forever.
Instead, our God delights to show mercy.
Our God again has compassion on us.
Our God tramples our sins underfoot
and hurls our iniquities into the depths of the sea.
Give thanks to our God, for our God is good!

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: "May the Light of God Go With You" Choir

Responsive Reading

Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

((((CHILDRENS CERTIFICATES))))))

Children's Hymn #570: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (V 1,3,4)

I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
No turning back, no turning back.

Children's Lesson

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

Matthew 10:32-39

³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. ³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Sermon

Isaiah 9:6 says,

Isaiah 9:6

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
 and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
 and his name shall be called
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

One of the most common references to Jesus Christ in the modern church is the Prince of Peace, yet here in today’s scripture we see that the Prince of Peace wields a sword. In fact, he clearly states **“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”**

It is this parallelism that makes Christianity so confusing to many people. How can Jesus be the prince of Peace and say he did not come to bring peace but a sword? So which one is it, is Jesus the Prince of Peace or does he in fact carry a sword? The answer is both.

The truth is that we are inundated with pictures of the peace bringing Jesus, pictures of him surrounded by children or perhaps holding a small lamb. The thought of him

descending upon mankind with a sword like some form of angelic warrior is foreign to the majority of Christians.

To understand why he makes such a bold statement we need to fully understand the context of the scripture. Remember that this part of scripture is all part of the little commission that Jesus is giving his disciples as he sends them out to bring his message to the Israelites. If you recall last week, he told them that they would go places where people would not want to hear what they have to say, and when that happens, they are to 'shake the dust from their sandals'. He has also warned them that some of them may be arrested or suffer persecution.

Matthew 10: 16-18

¹⁶ "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

So much of the Bible is taken out of context, someone will find a verse that sounds like it supports an idea they have or something they want to accomplish, and they will use it for their own purposes, and in doing so pull the wool over the eyes of those who do not spend time in their Bibles. This is why understanding the context in which today's scripture was spoken is so important.

Jesus is indeed the Prince of Peace, in John 14:27 he said,

John 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

The first misunderstanding we often see promoted by today's scripture is one of World Peace and the call from Christians to be pacifists. Yet we need to understand that the peace that we speak of in the modern world and the peace that Jesus brings to us are two very different things. When we speak of peace in the modern day, we are usually referring to a time of no conflict, or no hostility. We all know that people halfheartedly always say that they would wish for world peace.

Yet we need to ask ourselves is something like world peace actually attainable in this world as it is right now. Historians at West Point, an American military officers school once tried to determine how many years of war and peace the world had experience in the last 6000 years. To the best of their knowledge over that time, there have been more than 14,351 wars and more than 3.6 billion people who have died in those wars. Roi make it even clearer they did not include terrorism or guerrilla warfare in their

calculation, and still they concluded that there were only roughly 293 years of human history where there were no major wars being fought.

So, when Jesus appears with a sword, he is not coming to bring a peace to the world in some form of military conquest and ending war for all time. He did not come to bring us a peace between peoples and nations, instead Jesus Christ came to bring us a much more important form of peace.

The peace that Christ offers to the world is unique. The peace that Jesus offers to all who follow him is a repair relationship with God. When our lives are being lived out of relationship with God, we are slaves to our own sins, doubts, and fears. It is only once our relationship with God is restored that we can understand true peace in this world. Conflicts, troubles, wars, and persecutions will always exist in our world, and they will always trouble mankind, unless they come to God in faith. We experience that worry, doubt and fear because all we have in the world is ourselves, we are separated from God.

It is only when we have true faith that all of the things of this world become secondary as we begin to understand the importance of God in our lives. When we have Christ as our Lord and Savior, we know peace in this world.

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The second misunderstanding of today's scripture is the other side of the coin. People will promote the idea of war or violence in the name of God. Yet this too is not something we see when we look at the scripture in context and look at Jesus throughout the Bible.

In the garden of Gethsemane when Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus and lopped the ear off the guard Jesus says to him,

Matthew 26:52-53

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Jesus indeed promoted peace. Yet so many throughout history have twisted the scriptures to justify their own desire for wealth and power. The crusades were a time of incomprehensible violence in the name of God. Religious leaders used scripture to

persuade thousands of men to pick up the sword and declare a 'Holy War' on the Muslims that were occupying the holy land of Israel. They did not understand that Christianity is not about a place but instead is about a people. Christianity is not about a place worth dying for, but instead is about a relationship worth dying for.

The same could be said of the Spanish Inquisition, which justified the torture and murder of many Jews, Muslims, and even non-Roman Catholic Christians by misusing the scriptures about Jesus and the sword he wields.

Perhaps the most infamous case of the misuse of scripture started with this speech, which was given on April 12, 1922,

“My feelings as a Christian point me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter. It points me to the man who once in loneliness, surrounded only by a few followers, recognized these Jews for what they were and summoned men to fight against them and who, God’s truth was greatest not as a sufferer but as a fighter. How terrific was His fight for the world against the Jewish poison. To-day, after two thousand years, with deepest emotion I recognize more profoundly than ever before in the fact that it was for this that He had to shed His blood upon the Cross.”

- **Adolf Hitler**

Like so many other who had intentionally misused scripture and the Bible for their own purposes, Adolf Hitler rallied a nation behind him by leading them astray. Yet he was absolutely wrong about who Christ is, Jesus is not a great warrior King who came to defeat nations through warfare, instead he is a great shepherd who will bring his people back to him through love of neighbor and love of enemy. In the Bible the most angered we see Jesus is when he flips the tables of the money lenders and drives out the livestock from the temple, and even then, he committed no acts of violence against the people or the animals, his anger was at the sinful nature of what they were doing not at the people themselves.

Jesus teaches that we are to turn the other cheek. He did not teach his followers to get angry and retaliate, instead he taught us to forgive and pray for those who cause us harm. Yet he also did not tell us to be pacifists, he calls for us to take up arms for our nations to defend those who cannot defend themselves. To wield the sword for the governing authorities in our lives, to protect the innocent and the weak, not for personal vengeance or power.

This is a critical point of the Christian Faith. And it is one that sets Christians apart from so many other religions in the world. Jesus called for all of his followers to love God first and then love their neighbors as themselves. He even tells us to love our enemies.

By contrast Islam, which calls itself a religion of peace teaches something very different. If look at the Quran it teaches in the Surah their scripture, 'And kill them (non-Muslims)

wherever you find them ... kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers (non-Muslims).’ Muhammad was literally a man of the sword, he was a warrior that would ride into battle and kill his enemies. The symbol of Islam is not the star and crescent, that is the symbol of the Ottoman empire, which is rejected by most Muslims, they prefer the symbol that is shown on the flag a Saudi Arabia, the sword with the inscription, ‘There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is his prophet’. Yet Christian organizations all around the world partner with Islamic organizations in the name of ecumenicism. Yet the two faiths could not be more radically opposed, Islam is spread through the sword and Christianity is spread through the preaching of the Gospel. This is what sets Jesus apart from the false idols of the world that are worshipped in so many religions. Jesus never took a life, instead he came to heal and restore physical life to those he met and eternal life to his faithful.

So, what did Jesus mean when he said, ‘**Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.**’ The answer lies in good exegetical practice, using scripture to understand scripture and it all points back to verse the beginning of today’s reading,

Matthew 10:32-33

³²So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

I am constantly told by people that faith and belief is a personal matter. In fact, many Christians are told that they can believe whatever they want, just do not tell others about it. However, this goes against so much of what we are taught in scripture. Even here Jesus tells us that we are to acknowledge our faith before others.

Yes, faith is personal. It is about a relationship between you and God, no one else can believe for you. However, you have a personal responsibility in the great commission to live a life that tells others about your faith in Jesus Christ in the way you speak and act in the world. Remember a few months back I asked the question, if someone were to objectively look at your life would there be enough evidence in it to prove you are a Christian?

It is around this proclamation of our faith publicly in our deeds and in our words that the idea of the sword that Christ carries is to be understood. The metaphor of the sword is that it cuts two ways, it divides.

Scripture teaches us that there are only two kinds of people in this world. They are referred to as the saved and the unsaved, the wheat and the tares or the sheep and the goats.

Jesus himself said it this way,

Matthew 12:30-32

³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Since the beginning this has been the division, those who belong to God and those who do not. If you read through Hebrews Chapter 11 you will see the names of many who have answered the call and walked in faith, the priests, and prophets of the Old Testament, those who suffered humiliation and persecution because of their belief in the One True Living God.

Hebrews 11:36-38

³⁶Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—³⁸of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

The lives of the apostles were no different.

Andrew was crucified.

Bartholomew was beaten and crucified.

James, the son of Alphaeus was stoned to death.

James, the son of Zebedee was beheaded.

Judas (not Iscariot) was stoned to death.

Matthew was speared to death.

Peter was crucified upside down.

Phillip was crucified.

Simon was crucified.

Thomas was speared to death.

Matthias was stoned to death.

And John – they attempted to boil him in oil, but he survived and instead was exiled to the Island of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation and died of old age.

You might think that that was a horrible time to be a Christian, that suffering, and persecution was prevalent, and you would be partially correct. However according to the voice of the martyrs, a Christian publication that tracks the persecution of Christianity throughout the world, as many as 160,000 Christians are killed every year as the persecution of Christians becomes more acceptable on the global scale and

especially in Muslim ruled nations. To put that in perspective this year 1 out of every 200 professing Christians will be killed for believing in Jesus.

So, while we may not be feeling the pressures of persecution here, yet the day may come when we risk alienation or even arrest and persecution because of our adherence to the scriptures.

Even so many people will find that they are going to lose friends and family members who will cut them out of their lives because of the fact that they profess their faith. Christians may find that they are no longer invited to family events or activities, that they may be ostracized because of their faith in public and in private.

Jesus is telling his followers that they may feel the cut, the pain of separation when those they care for and those they love, turn on them because of their faith. He is not telling us not to love our family, he is telling us that our love of him may cause rifts with those in this world. He is telling us that if we are truly his followers our love of God supersedes the love of anyone and everyone that exists in this world.

Jesus himself experienced this, when he was preaching and claiming to be the Messiah his family showed up and said that he must be out of his mind.

Mark 3:21

²¹ And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

In fact, as you can see, they even tried to get him to stop preaching.

This still happens today, in many cultures and religions around the world when someone becomes a Christian they are exiled from the family. In many Muslim families if you convert to Christianity, you risk punishment, beatings and even death, rather than exile.

This is why so many Christians today hesitate to share their faith, because when they do share the truth of scriptures at office events, or family events or with their friends battle breaks out, the proverbial swords are drawn and a duel begins where someone is going to get cut, get hurt, that is the sword that Jesus is speaking of and this is why we need to let our love of him supersede our love of others. If we love Jesus first, we are willing to show other why they should love him as well rather than letting them continue on lost in this world.

This is what Jesus means when he tells us to take up our cross and follow him. Taking up your cross does not mean simply wearing a cross as a symbol of your faith, it does not mean taking up the social justice causes, or the environmental justice causes or any of the other things that people try to say it means. The cross meant one thing and one thing only in Jesus's day, it meant that the person carrying it was going to die.

Christians have to be willing to die, to die to self. The biggest reason that so many people are afraid to share their faith to speak about God is not because they are afraid of persecution and death. It is because they are afraid that someone will make fun of them, someone will ridicule them or that they will miss out on some earthly opportunity that might make their lives a little better. They are afraid that they will not 'fit in' to what society expects of them.

The only way to get over that fear of embarrassment, or loss is to die to yourself daily. To die to your own fleshly pride. Our flesh, our pride wants to avoid embarrassment, wants to avoid ridicule, wants to avoid discomfort. Yet when we pick up our cross and die to self, we begin to realize it no longer hurts when people ridicule us, when people make fun of us, or criticize us or even ostracize us.

When you die to self, the opinions that people hold of you begin to matter less and less and your faith in Christ becomes stronger and stronger. Paul tells us in Galatians,

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

When you profess your faith in Christ you gain so much more than you lose.

Matthew 10:38-39

**³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

When you live your life for yourself you lose. If you lose yourself for God, you win. There is no middle ground, there is no putting one foot on each side of the fence, it is an all or nothing endgame. You can choose to make your life on earth easy and sacrifice your eternity or you can suffer in your life here and enjoy an eternity.

Some people claim that you have to give up a lot of things in this world to be a Christian, that is absolutely true. When you faithfully follow Christ, you give up everything, including yourself. However, what you gain is so much more than what you lose. You gain His presence in your life, His peace in your life. You give up being a slave to the sins of the flesh and the fears of the world and gain freedom from sin and forgiveness of your transgression. You give up living a life of trying to keep up with others, a life of constantly pursuing more and gain a life of purpose and acceptance and appreciation for what you have. You give up hell and you gain heaven.

As Jim Elliot put it, 'he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose.'

Today's scripture teaches us that if we love God we risk being cut by the sword, but that risk is worth the reward. The Prince of Peace does indeed wield a sword, not one that he uses to hurt anyone. Instead, it is a sword that teaches us to follow him, that helps us understand our faith and often brings us to points in our life where we acknowledge him as our Lord. So go forth and proclaim the Lord as you learn to die to self and secure your rewards in heaven.

Let us Pray,

A Prayer for Peace

O God, you are the bottomless well of peace,
the heavenly sea of love,
the fountain of blessings,
and the giver of affection,
and you send peace to those who receive it.

Open to us this day the sea of your love,
and water us with the flowing streams of your grace.
Make us children of quietness, and heirs of peace.
Enkindle the fire of your love in us;
plant holy reverence for you in us;
strengthen our weakness by your power;
bind us closely to you and to each other
in one firm bond of unity;
for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Source: Syrian Clementine Liturgy, (attributed to Clement of Rome, c. 96)

Hymn: "Bless God"

In the stillness of my soul, I reflect to see
How God's love and pow'r have grown and moved inside of me

CHORUS

Bless God for all He's done bless God for Christ His Son
Let us magnify Him for He's holy, holy.
One voice in unity, one voice of praise to Thee
With hearts of love and worship we will sing Bless God

You've been my strength, You've been my joy, You've softly dried my tears
I thank you for the faithfulness you've shown down through the years.

CHORUS

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 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 #466: "Praise the Lord With the Sound of Trumpet"

Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,
 Praise the Lord with the harp and lute,
 Praise the Lord with the gentle-sounding flute.
 Praise the Lord in the field and forest,
 Praise the Lord in the city square,
 Praise the Lord anytime and anywhere.
 Praise the Lord in the wind and sunshine,
 Praise the Lord in the dark of night,
 Praise the Lord in the rain or snow or in the morning light.
 Praise the Lord in the deepest valley,
 Praise the Lord on the highest hill,
 Praise the Lord; never let your voice be still.

Praise the Lord with the crashing cymbal,
 Praise the Lord with the pipe and string,
 Praise the Lord with the joyful songs you sing.
 Praise the Lord on a weekday morning,
 Praise the Lord on a Sunday noon,
 Praise the Lord by the light of sun or moon.
 Praise the Lord in the time of sorrow,
 Praise the Lord in the time of joy,
 Praise the Lord every moment; nothing let your praise destroy.
 Praise the Lord in the peace and quiet,
 Praise the Lord in your work or play,

Praise the Lord everywhere in every way!

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Help us to really know you,
to bless, worship, and praise you
for all your works
and for all that shines forth from them:
your almighty power, wisdom, kindness,
justice, mercy, and truth.
Help us to direct all our living—
what we think, say, and do—
so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us
but always honored and praised.

Your kingdom come.
Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way
that more and more we submit to you.
Keep your church strong, and add to it.
Destroy the devil's work;
destroy every force that revolts against you
and every conspiracy against your Word.
Do this until your kingdom is so complete and perfect
that in it you are all in all.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Help us and all people
to reject our own wills
and to obey your will without any back talk.
Your will alone is good.
Help us one and all to carry out the work we are called to,
as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
Do take care of all our physical needs
so that we come to know
that you are the only source of everything good,
and that neither our work and worry
nor your gifts
can do us any good without your blessing.
And so help us to give up our trust in creatures
and to put trust in you alone.

Forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 Because of Christ's blood,
 do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are,
 any of the sins we do
 or the evil that constantly clings to us.
 Forgive us, just as we are fully determined,
 as evidence of your grace in us,
 to forgive our neighbors.

And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one.
 By ourselves we are too weak
 to hold our own even for a moment.
 And our sworn enemies—
 the devil, the world, and our own flesh—
 never stop attacking us.
 And so, Lord,
 uphold us and make us strong
 with the strength of your Holy Spirit,
 so that we may not go down to defeat
 in this spiritual struggle,
 but may firmly resist our enemies
 until we finally win the complete victory.

For yours is the kingdom and the power
 and the glory forever.
 We have made all these requests of you
 because, as our all-powerful King,
 you not only want to,
 but are able to give us all that is good;
 and because your holy name,
 and not we ourselves,
 should receive all the praise, forever.
 It is even more sure that you listen to our prayer,
 than that we really desire what we pray for. **Amen.**

Benediction

May the grace of Christ, which daily renews us,
 and the love of God, which enables us to love all,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which unites us in one body,
 make us eager to obey the will of God until we meet again,
 through Jesus Christ, our Lord