

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Good People  
Proper 9  
Matthew 11:20-24

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

In Christ, the God of heaven has made his home on earth.  
**Christ dwells among us and is one with us.**

Highest of all creation, he lives among the least.  
**He journeys with the rejected and welcomes the weary.**

Come now, all who thirst,  
**and drink the water of life.**

Come now, all who hunger,  
**and be filled with good things.**

Come now, all who seek,  
**and be warmed by the fire of love**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

The LORD our God be with us,  
as he was with our ancestors;  
may he not leave us or abandon us,  
but incline our hearts to him,  
to walk in all his ways,  
and to keep his commandments,  
his statutes, and his ordinances,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
Now and forever. Amen

Opening Hymn #706: "Come, Let Us Sing" (V 1,2,4)

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,  
 tender and true, tender and true;  
 out of the heart of the Father above,  
 streaming to me and to you:  
 wonderful love, wonderful love  
 dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell  
 joyfully came, joyfully came,  
 came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,  
 sharing their sorrow and shame:  
 seeking the lost, seeking the lost,  
 saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love;  
 come and abide, come and abide,  
 lifting my life till it rises above  
 envy and falsehood and pride:  
 seeking to be, seeking to be  
 lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

### **Call to Confession**

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

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD,  
 and of your steadfast love,  
 for they have been from of old.  
 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
 according to your steadfast love remember me,  
 for your goodness' sake, O LORD!  
 Good and upright is the LORD;  
 therefore, he instructs sinners in the way.  
 For your name's sake, O LORD,  
 pardon my guilt, for it is great.  
 Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
 for I am lonely and afflicted.  
 Relieve the troubles of my heart,  
 and bring me out of my distress.  
 Consider my affliction and my trouble,  
 and forgive all my sins.  
 In Jesus Name we pray. 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.**

**Responsive Reading****Psalm 145:8-14**

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> **The LORD is good to all,  
 and his mercy is over all that he has made.**

<sup>10</sup> All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,  
 and all your saints shall bless you!

<sup>11</sup> **They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom  
 and tell of your power,**

<sup>12</sup> **to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,  
 and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**

<sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
 and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

[The LORD is faithful in all his words  
 and kind in all his works.]

<sup>14</sup> **The LORD upholds all who are falling  
 and raises up all who are bowed down.**

**Children's Hymn: "O Be Careful Little Eyes What You See"**

O be careful little eyes what you see  
 O be careful little eyes what you see  
 For the Father up above, is looking down in love  
 O be careful little eyes what you see

O be careful little ears what you hear  
 O be careful little ears what you hear  
 For the Father up above is looking down in love  
 O be careful little ears what you hear

O be careful little mouth what you say  
 O be careful little mouth what you say  
 For the Father up above is looking down in love  
 O be careful little mouth what you say

O be careful little hands what you do  
 O be careful little hands what you do  
 For the Father up above is looking down in love  
 O be careful little hands what you do

O be careful little feet where you go  
 O be careful little feet where you go  
 For the Father up above is looking down in love  
 O be careful little feet where you go

### **Children's Lesson**

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

### **Scripture**

#### **Matthew 11:20-24**

<sup>20</sup> Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup> But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

### **Sermon**

Last week we spoke of the gift of grace that God gives all believers and the rewards that are awaiting those who carry out his works here on earth. This week we are looking at the other side of that, the punishments that await those who do not believe or obey even after hearing the truth of the Gospel.

This is a difficult bit of Scripture for many people to hear. Jesus is speaking about whole cities that are in for a surprise when the day of judgement comes. People who may have assumed that they had earned a great reward in heaven, or at least assumed that they attained their own salvation, but are in fact not saved at all.

This is who Jesus is speaking to in today's Scripture, people who have heard the Gospel, heard the message of repent and believe, and yet still to choose to live their lives the way they choose. Jesus is speaking to cities in which he performed miracles and preached the Word, so there is no possible way for the people to deny that they have heard of him or what he teaches, there is no way for them to claim that they did know that they were called to repentance.

**Matthew 11:20-24**

**<sup>20</sup> Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup> But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."**

Jesus speaks of six different cities with which we should all be familiar. He gives them a very clear and very stern warning about what they should expect on the day of judgement.

Three of the cities he speaks of are cities from the Old Testament, cities that faced God's judgement because of the ways in which the people who lived in them disobeyed God. It is important that we understand this, because one of the main arguments in disobeying the Bible in our current culture is the idea that the Old Testament and New Testament are somehow separated. This Scripture, these words spoken by Jesus would go directly against that teaching, he is clearly showing that the Old and New Testaments are woven together in the Scriptures.

Jesus refers to the Old Testament cities of Tyre and Sidon, both were large Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean Sea. In the Old Testament these two cities were close by to the people of God and they are often denounced for their worship of the false god Baal. Worship of Baal was a perverse religion in which child sacrifice was known to occur and temple prostitution was regular. The worship of Baal was not very different from our modern' cultures acceptance and almost idolization of sexual immorality, sexual freedom, pornography, and abortion. Two of the

greatest prophets in the Old Testament, Isaiah, and Ezekiel both prophecies against the cities of Tyre and Sidon and speak of their destruction because of their sinful nature.

Next, he speaks of Sodom. This is perhaps one of the most well-known destructions of a city in the Old Testament, not just by Christians, but by many non-Christians as well. Sodom and its sister city Gomorrah were destroyed by God in the book of Genesis. They were destroyed for reasons that did not differ much from Tyre and Sidon, they were cities filled with wickedness and sexual immorality and for that they are destroyed in a rain of sulfur and fire.

The Jews of Jesus's day all knew of these places, they were commonly referred to in the teachings in the temples and synagogues, so to be told that the punishment of modern cities would be far worse than the punishment given to these sinful and wicked places would be shocking.

This shocking warning is spoken over three cities, more like towns where Jesus had been ministering: Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. All three towns were located in the northern region of Israel along the Sea of Galilee, roughly 40 km northeast of Jesus's hometown of Nazareth.

Capernaum was a small fishing town and had become a central hub from which Jesus preached to the surrounding region after leaving his hometown of Nazareth. In the book of Matthew, we can read about many of the miracles that were performed in Capernaum, including raising the centurion's daughter from the dead.

Chorazin was just a few miles north of Capernaum and we actually know very little of the town. Bethsaida was likely the hometown of three of the disciples, Peter, Andrew, and Philip. Throughout the Gospels we do not read of any of the great miracles that were performed in these cities, yet Matthew implies that they occurred. This is important for us to understand, the Bible is not a complete and exhaustive account of the life and miracles performed by Jesus. John reminds of this in:

**John 21:25**

**<sup>25</sup> Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**

So, we have three towns in which Jesus had been preaching, teaching and performing miracles, three ordinary Jewish towns, likely filled with people who believed that they were all good god-fearing and Scripture obeying people, being compared to three cities known for their disobedience and wickedness.

In the comparison we learn some important truths about God. Firstly, we learn that God knows everything. EVERYTHING! He even knows what the people of Tyre and Sidon would have done if they had been privileged with the presence of Jesus and his teaching and miracles.

**Matthew 11:21 & 23**

<sup>21</sup> **“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.**

He also speaks of what would have happened to the city of Sodom if they had experienced the miracles he was performing.

**Matthew 11:21**

<sup>23</sup> **And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.**

This is often referred to as God’s omniscience, or ‘contingent knowledge’. God knows the outcome of every ‘What if’ question that mankind asks. Often in our lives as we look back, we wonder, ‘What would have happened if I had made this choice or that choice?’ or ‘what would have happened if this had happened to me, or this had never happened to me?’ We look back on our lives and ask these questions because we cannot know, we can only guess and speculate. However, God knows, God has an infinite knowledge of every possibility and every outcome of every event that happens and does not happen in our lives.

This is why we can trust in God; he always knows what is best for us in every time and every situation. If we are his people, he is always doing what is best for us and our salvation, remember that God’s primary concern is not our pleasure or comfort in this world, it is the salvation of our everlasting life.

Paul puts it like this in the book of Romans.

**Romans 11:33-34**

<sup>33</sup> **Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!** <sup>34</sup> **“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”**

God knows every decision that you will face in your life, every decision that you will make and the outcome of every possibility that results from that decision. For those people out there, who say how could God know who I am and what I choose, trust the Scripture He knows.

Next, we get a reinforcement of what we learned last week, grace is a gift from God given to his people. God does not owe grace and salvation to anyone, no one earns it through any act of works that they do, it is not a wage, it is a gift. This is both difficult to understand and difficult to accept, we like to believe that we are in control of everything in our lives, but it is the truth that we do not. God is a loving God; he shows his compassion and his mercy to all of his creatures. Yet here in the Scriptures we see that if the miracles that were performed in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had been performed in Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, that those

cities would have repented and been remained. This begs the question: Why didn't God preform great miracles in those cities? Why didn't God force those people to recognize Him as the One True Living God and save them all? Again, it's a tough question. Some might think that it is because the people in those cities had little or no faith, and that is why they are doomed, they refused God, they refused to repent and obey. Yet that is countered by the very point that Jesus is making in the Scriptures. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, all good-faithful Jewish towns seen to be no better than these ancient pagan cities.

The only real conclusion that we can come to is that God does not owe miracles or miraculous signs to anyone. When people go out and look at all of the evidence in nature of God as the creator and reject that idea, or when they are presented with God's Word through interactions with faithful Christians carrying out the great commission or directly in the Bible and choose to reject it, when they are constantly declaring their right to be left alone by God and to live their lives in the way that they want to live them because they were 'born this way', then we have to accept that they are justly deserving of the judgement that God cast upon them.

God has been more than fair with people. He was more than fair with Tyre and Sidon. He was more than fair with Sodom, remember that God told Lot that if he could find just ten righteous people in the city of Sodom it would be spared, 10 good people could have saved that entire city and they could not be found. God has been more than fair with the people in the modern world who idolize sexual immorality and abortion, they have been given ample opportunity to hear his Word, to be rebuked for their ways, and Christians all around the world will continue to tell them of their sin and continue to call for them to come to God through the great commission until the day of repentance. And on that day of judgement, they will not be able to go to God and say 'God, you never gave me a chance!' They have all been given plenty of chances and they have continuously ignored and rejected God so that they could live in their sinful pleasures.

Yet the truth is that God does give some people more chances to repent and come to faith than others. The people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were given more chances to come to God than those who had lived in Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. How many of us seated here today have been given more opportunities to repent and believe than others we know in our own lives and in the world? How many here have been exposed to the truth of the Scripture more than other Christians that we know? This is all part of God's plan, and we need to know and understand that God's grace is owed to no-one, it is a gift that He gives to his people. Truthfully God gives a portion of his grace to everyone, everyone is given a chance to come to faith, just some people are given more chances to be exposed to God and his truths than others.

Is that fair? I am guessing right now that many people are saying 'No way! That's not fair at all.' There are two things I want to remind you of before you get too far into that mindset. Firstly, God knows all of the possible outcomes of every choice that people face. Secondly, that it is a gift not something that is earned or deserved. To put that second one in perspective. How many of us have had a birthday in the past twelve months? How many of you received a birthday gift that was wonderful from someone who cared for you? How many of you gave a



birthday gift to every single person that you cared for? Is it unfair that someone who cared for you gave you a gift and that you did not give a gift to every single person you care for? No, it's not unfair because it is a gift. Imagine if I tried to give gifts to every person I cared for, I would go broke before I could put food on the table every month. So is it fair that I get gifts for my family and not for every single person I care for, absolutely, because they are gifts, not things which are earned. Gifts are just that gifts, just because we give someone a gift does not mean we deserve one in return and God's grace is a gift. It is not unfair when God gives the gift of His grace, as many chances to come to faith, to one person and not another. That is God's choice.

The last point made in the Scripture is the counter to last week's message on how our rewards in heaven will be different based on our service here on earth. At the time of final judgment there will be different degrees of punishment for those who do not repent and come to faith. Jesus very plainly and very clearly states that the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, those who had been exposed to the truth of who God was through miracles, preaching and teaching would face a much harsher punishment than those unbelievers who had not received the same amount of grace in the cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom.

Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans.

**Romans 2:6-8**

**<sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.**

We will each be judged, believer and unbeliever, and based on that we will receive our just reward if we are Christians and our just punishment if we are not. Throughout Christian history there have been various ways in which people picture this punishment, perhaps the most well known is Dante's inferno, which describes a journey through the descending layers of hell, with each punishment getting worse as you move deeper and deeper into the depths of hell. However, this is all speculation. There is no clear picture of what reward or punishment will be received in the Bible, there is only the truth that there will be differences in reward and punishment.

The one truth that is shared about the punishment in hell is that it will be an eternal separation from God and all of the blessings he shares with people. This alone is a horrible punishment that I would not wish upon my worst enemy. This is why we are called to the great commission, to show the love of God with friends, neighbors, strangers and even enemies. So that none of them would suffer the wrath and punishment of the unbeliever.

This is not something that is easy to talk about, but it is the Biblical truth, and it is important for all believer to know and understand, because it is one of the reasons, we should be living a Christlike life. So that we can show others the importance of faith.

The importance of this is further driven home by the fact that Jesus is proclaiming this horrible punishment not on towns that were much worse than Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, but on towns that were filled with what would have been considered 'good' people by the society of the time.

Let that sink in, people that society considered 'good people' will suffer a worse fate than the people who were burned up in sulfur and fire in Sodom. People who are considered 'good people' will suffer a fate worse than those of Tyre and Sidon, two cities that were wiped from the face of the earth in the destruction of warfare.

This is the message that Jesus is giving to the 'good' citizens of Galilee, people who were proud of being Jewish, people who considered themselves the faithful servants of God, people who thought of themselves as so much better than those of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. Jesus is telling them that they are in for a terrible surprise on the day of Judgment. He is not saying this because they were sexually immoral and wicked peoples, he is delivering them this warning because they have heard the truth of God's Word, they have been exposed to his miracles and they did not embrace his teachings. Though in many ways they seemed to be 'good people' on the outside, to the society and culture of the time, their hearts and minds were just as cold to God as that of the pagan cities which had suffered God's wrath. And because they had been given so much more grace, so many more opportunities to come to true faith, the punishment that they will receive on the day of judgement will be worse than the wrath of God that was carried out on the people of those wicked cities.

What does that mean in today's world? No people in all of history have been given as many opportunities as are possible today to hear the truth of God's Word, no people in history have had God's teachings so easily at their fingertips. Almost everyone in western culture owns a phone and a Bible can be downloaded for free, free commentaries exist all over the internet. There are Christian television channels, radio stations, publishers, and music. There are faithful Christians, Bible believing Christians, Scripture adhering Christians all over the world sharing the truth each and every day.

Yet there are also those who are out there teaching a false gospel, one that serves their own sinful nature. The book of Timothy warns us of this.

### **2 Timothy 4:1-5**

**I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup> As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

There will be people who want to believe that they are 'good people' like the people of Chorazin, like the people of Bethsaida, like the people of Capernaum. People who want to believe that they are faithful followers of God, people who believe that they are saved, yet they have refused to repent, they have held on to some aspect of self and refused to pick up their cross and be a true follower of Jesus in their lives. On the outside they seem to be 'good people' but inside their hearts and minds are cold to God, because they cannot give up their sinful nature. For these people the day of Judgement will hold a terrible surprise.

**Matthew 7:21-23**

**<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'**

This is why we need to heed the warning that Jesus gives in today's Scripture. There may be people we know who are 'good people', people who have gone to church their entire lives, people who have been baptized, people we would consider mostly faithful who are in for a terrible surprise on the day of judgement. The reason Jesus spoke these words to the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum was not because he was casting judgement upon them, he was giving them a warning a chance to repent and come to true faith. This Scripture, like the warning given in Matthew chapter seven is given so that those who consider themselves Christians can be given a chance to examine their faith and realize the danger that they are in if they do not come to true faith.

This warning is given to all people, nominal believers, and unbelievers, of the terrible fate that awaits them on judgement day. To teach them that one day we all will be judged and receive our just reward or punishment. To let everyone, know that Jesus's salvation is a free gift, that no matter what you have done, no matter how old you are, no matter how lost you may seem, it is not too late to repent and come to God and ask for forgiveness.

This warning is also given to true believers, to the faithful, to remind us of the importance of the great commission. We need to be out there, sharing the truth of the Gospel and what it says about sin, what it says about repentance, what it says about rewards and punishments, not with just a few people, but with everyone we meet, in the way that we live our lives.

It is also there to remind us that there are 'good people' people who might consider themselves Christian, yet they have been embracing a false gospel who are going to also face that terrible surprise on the day of judgement, and it is our duty to share the truth with them just as much as it is with the unbeliever. If we care about others the same way that God cares about us, we need to be willing to warn people about what is ahead. They may not like it, they may not heed it, we may need to 'shake the dust from our sandals' but we need to be willing to tell them the truth because that is what God has called each of us to do.

Brothers and sisters, as we leave here today let us walk in faith with Jesus Christ as his Salt and Light in our community, let us each be willing to share the truth of the Gospel message and its call for repentance with family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, and enemies.

Let us pray,

By Your Word You Have Brought Us out of Darkness  
 Lord God, heavenly Father,  
 we most heartily thank you  
 that by your Word  
 you have brought us out of the darkness of error  
 into the light of your grace.  
 Mercifully help us to walk in that light,  
 guard us from all error and false doctrine  
 and grant that we may not become ungrateful  
 and despise and persecute your Word,  
 as your people did long ago,  
 but receive it with all our heart,  
 govern our lives according to it  
 and put all our trust in your grace  
 through the merit of your dear Son,  
 Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one true God, now and forever.

**Hymn #699: "All the Way My Saviour Leads Me"**

All the way my Saviour leads me;  
 what have I to ask beside?  
 Can I doubt his tender mercy  
 who through life has been my guide?  
 Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,  
 here by faith in him to dwell;  
 for I know, whate'er befall me  
 Jesus doeth all things well.

All the way my Saviour leads me,  
 cheers each winding path I tread,  
 gives me grace for every trial,  
 feeds me with the living bread.  
 Though my weary steps may falter,  
 and my soul athirst may be,  
 gushing from the rock before me,  
 lo, a spring of joy I see.

All the way my Saviour leads me,  
 oh the fullness of his love!  
 Perfect rest to me is promised  
 in my Father's house above.  
 When my spirit, clothed immortal,  
 wings its flight to realms of day,  
 this my song through endless ages,  
 'Jesus led me all the way!'

### **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**

#### **(Congregant Prepared)**

#### **Closing Hymn #681: "We Have Heard a Joyful Sound" (V 1,3,4)**

We have heard a joyful sound,  
 Jesus saves! Jesus saves!  
 Spread the gladness all around:  
 Jesus saves! Jesus saves!  
 Bear the news to every land,  
 climb the steeps and cross the waves;  
 onward! 'tis our Lord's command:  
 Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Sing above the battle's strife,  
 Jesus saves, Jesus saves.  
 By his death and endless life,  
 Jesus saves. Jesus saves!  
 Sing it softly through the gloom,  
 when the heart for mercy craves;

sing in triumph o'er the tomb,  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Sing above the battle's strife,  
Jesus saves, Jesus saves.  
By his death and endless life,  
Jesus saves. Jesus saves!  
Sing it softly through the gloom,  
when the heart for mercy craves;  
sing in triumph o'er the tomb,  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

### **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**

May God go before you to lead you.  
May God go behind you to guard you.  
May God go beneath you to support you.  
May God go beside you to befriend you.  
Do not be afraid.  
Let the blessing of God—the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—  
come upon you today and settle in around you.

Do not be afraid.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen