

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023  
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Whose Authority Do You Live Under?  
Proper 21  
Matthew 21:23-32**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

Here God speaks to us words of challenge and comfort.  
**Here Jesus stands among us, calling us to acts of mercy.**

Even now, the Holy Spirit is moving in our midst,  
**filling us with hope and inspiring us to faithfulness.**

Let us worship God, ever Three and ever One.  
**Let us praise God's holy name together!**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Creating God,  
beauty and harmony mark your creation.  
As the seasons change,  
we see you are still at work in the world,  
transforming hearts and situations.  
We praise you for all you do to heal this world  
to bring peace to places of conflict,  
working for goodness to prevail.  
You offer us new possibilities day by day,  
and so we place our trust in your redeeming power.  
Renew our energy for mission this autumn  
and open our eyes to new opportunities to reach out in Jesus' name.  
Through the power of the Spirit, make us participants in your work,  
bringing justice and joy into the world you love.  
**Amen.**

**Opening Hymn #291: "Thou Whose Almighty Word" (V 1,2,4)**

Thou whose almighty word  
 chaos and darkness heard  
 and took their flight,  
 hear us, we humbly pray,  
 and where the gospel day  
 sheds not its glorious ray  
 Let There Be Light!

Saviour who came to bring  
 on thy redeeming wing  
 healing and sight,  
 health to the sick in mind,  
 sight to the inly blind,  
 now to all humankind  
 Let There Be Light!

Blessed and holy Three,  
 glorious Trinity,  
 Wisdom, Love, Might,  
 boundless as ocean's tide  
 rolling in fullest pride,  
 through the world, far and wide,  
 Let There Be Light!

### **Call to Confession**

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

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Gracious God,  
 our sins are too heavy to carry,  
 too real to hide,  
 and too deep to undo.  
 Forgive what our lips tremble to name,  
 what our hearts can no longer bear,  
 and what has become for us  
 a consuming fire of judgment.  
 Set us free from a past that we cannot change;  
 open to us a future in which we can be changed;  
 and grant us grace  
 to grow more and more in your likeness and image;  
 through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

The prophet Micah declared that God requires of us three things:  
to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.  
To all who repent, who act for justice and seek to serve God and neighbour in kindness,  
God offers forgiveness and peace.  
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

### 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: "To Touch the Heart of God" Choir

### Responsive Reading

#### Psalm 78:1-4

1 Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth!

**2 I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings from of old,**

3 things that we have heard and known,  
that our fathers have told us.

**4 We will not hide them from their children,  
but tell to the coming generation  
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might,  
and the wonders that he has done.**

### Children's Hymn: "Do Lord, Oh Do Lord, Oh Do Remember Me"

Do Lord, oh, do Lord, do remember me  
Do Lord, oh, do Lord, oh, do remember me  
Do Lord, oh, do Lord, do remember me  
Way beyond the Blue

I've got a home in Glory Land that outshines the sun  
I've got a home in Glory Land that outshines the sun

I've got a home in Glory Land that outshines the sun  
Way beyond the Blue

I took Jesus as My Savior, you take Him too  
I took Jesus as My Savior, you take Him too  
I took Jesus as My Savior, you take Him too  
While He's calling you

### **Children's Lesson**

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

#### **Scripture**

##### **Matthew 21:23-32**

<sup>23</sup> And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup> Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup> The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup> But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

<sup>28</sup> "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup> And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup> And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

#### **Sermon**

There is an old saying that I am sure many of us have used at least a few times in our lives, 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions.' And like so many of the phrases and idioms we use in the English language this too has a Biblical origin. This phrase was started by a Saint Benard of Clairvaux, a leader of the Benedictine Order of Monks who said it this way, 'l'enfer est plein de bonnes volontes et desirs' in English 'hell is full of good wishes and desires.'

We know this is true from our own experiences and observations, after all we usually use this phrase when someone does something which they intended to be good, but it turns out to have a bad result. We see this happen at the individual level, the corporate level, the organizational level and even the governmental level. The American government in the 1920's established what they thought was a good economic policy to help the country recover from World War I and its costs, yet that same policy was what cause the great depression and the suffering of so many people, a good intention, a bad result.

We trust in the authority of our leaders, whether it's here at the church level or at the governmental level. We trust them to make the right choices and decisions with our best interests in mind. In truth, we all rely on the authority of government, military, police, business, education, church, and other fields to use their authority and expertise to make the best possible decisions to guide us through the things in this world which we do not fully understand.

And they almost always do, many studies have shown that even when something goes wrong, it was almost always not the intention of the people who caused the wrong. They did not plan for the problem, they planned for the best and the problem arose.

It was no different in Jesus's day, authority was an important aspect of Jewish life. They had strong beliefs around who help authority over them and who did not. They believed that as people of God, it was God alone who held authority over them and that the Romans Government did not. Yes, they submitted to the Roman rulership out of necessity, for their survival, but they did not believe that Rome had any right to govern them.

Instead, they believed that God had given them people to govern them in his place here on earth, the High priests, the great Sanhedrin, and all of the other councils of Priests that existed throughout the Jewish world.

For this reason, when someone like John the Baptist appeared or Jesus himself appeared they did not know how to fit them into their understanding of authority. After all they were not like their Roman overlords, who ruled unjustly and enforced their will through the threat of military action. They also did not fit into the recognized authorities the High priests and Sanhedrin; they did not hold an official title in these groups and had never been vetted through the joining and teachings of them. So, the question that was often asked was, what authority did these men and their teachings have over me?

That question about the authority of Jesus's teaching is still as true today as they were 2000 years ago. North Americans pride themselves on their own autonomy, which is a word when properly defined is auto, self, and nomos, law, or authority. In essence we have sought to become our own authority, literally the law unto ourselves. There is a belief that is prevalent in our society that the more laws we have over ourselves, the more freedom we have to do whatever we want, we will be happier. We live in a society in which regardless of our beliefs

and intentions, when we live our life under our own authority, we are actually by definition rejecting God and his authority over our lives, because there can only be one authority, God, or man.

This conflict between man's own authority and the authority of God is presented here in Matthew 21, the conflict we are seeing between Jesus and the religious leaders is focused on this question. Who has the authority over man's life? The religious authorities question the authority of Jesus because his teachings challenged the authority and power they had in their own lives and over the lives of others.

The truth is that regardless of our intentions, regardless of what we state our beliefs are, when we fail to submit to the authority of Jesus, we are setting ourselves up for failure. This is what Saint Benard meant when he said that 'the road to hell is paved with good intentions' Because submitting our lives to God's authority is what all faithful Christians are called to do as they walk as Salt and Light in this world.

It begins in the Scripture the very same way it appears in the lives of many people, a confrontation between Jesus and the world.

**Matthew 21:23**

**And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"**

'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority.'

The group that had gathered to ask this of Jesus would have been chief priests and elders and likely would have included Caiaphas and Annas, who had served in the leadership of the Jewish people for many years. Given the seriousness of the confrontation with Jesus it is very likely that the captain of the temple and others of religious authority within the Sanhedrin, the temple and other religious councils had all gathered to confront Jesus about his authority.

The various religious groups would all be represented, Pharisees, Scribes, Herodians and probably some Zealots and Essenes. All of these groups had disagreements with one another, they were constantly fighting with one another about teachings and authority, yet when it came to Jesus Christ, they found a common ground, they found a common ground because Jesus was a threat to the authority of the entire religious establishment of the time.

Just the day before this Scripture takes place, Jesus had been in the temple and cleared out the courtyard. He had chased out those he had claimed were making 'his father's house into a den of robbers' and by doing so created a space where the people could once again come to worship God in the Court of the Gentiles.

As he entered the temple that day, he was likely followed by many people who had either witnessed what he had done the day before or heard about it. People who had their interests peaked by this man who seemed to have an authority to teach about God in the temple even though he was not a member of the religious authorities. In the parallel Scriptures of Luke, we learn that Jesus was teaching daily in the temple on the Gospel of the kingdom and that all of the people were hanging on his words.

This is why the religious authorities challenge Jesus when they see him approach the temple that morning. They wanted to question Jesus on everything he had done. They wanted to challenge his authority to clear out the temple, they wanted to question his authority on teaching the Gospel. They wanted to question this man who in their eyes is just a villager from a small town, whose followers call him a prophet, on why he thinks that he can challenge the authority of a duly constituted court of the official guardians of the temple and of the religious life of Jerusalem. The religious leaders could not ignore what Jesus had done, his teachings and actions were a threat to positions and their authority.

Once again to fully understand this, we need to understand the practices of the time. In rabbinic circles, the Jewish church, it was necessary to cite or quote some previous rabbi if you wanted to be heard. Rabbis had to have served an apprenticeship or been taught under a previous rabbi, and Jesus had not been ordained into the Jewish system of church leadership. This is why the religious leaders challenge him on his authority. Jesus had no authority to teach, yet alone heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead in their minds. On top of that why had he, an untrained and unrecognized, a self-appointed rabbi, taken on the task of cleaning out the temple, of casting out the merchants and money lenders which they had approved of being in the temple. Those merchants and money lenders had been given permission to work within the temple walls by the religious leaders, and in casting them out, Jesus had implied that his authority came from somewhere higher than their own.

The truth is that our world is not much different, we often look for an outward sign of authority and give it more value than it should have. We look at people's education, their title, their position, or their connections and grant them authority in our lives based upon these things. But Jesus's authority did not come from human things, it came from who he was not from anything superficial and worldly. As true followers of Christ we need to recognize that we have this authority, we need to have the ability to confidently speak the truth, to share the truth of Scripture in our lives, even if those who have authority in other aspects of our life disagree, because we have the authority of Christ to speak the truth of his word.

As Christians we do not need to wait for official recognition by some other authority before, we speak up on the truth. We do not need an official title or position before we act. As we spoke about last week, God calls all of us to be active in his work here on earth, he expects us to be sharing the truth with others, because we have been commissioned to do so and, in that commission, we are given his spiritual authority to act as his servants here on earth.

What does spiritual authority mean? It means that we have been given his power when it comes to doing his work.

Think of a police officer who is directing traffic at a red light that has gone out. Does he have the power to stop cars? Can he physically stop a car from going through the intersection? NO! instead he has been given the legal authority to do so. People stop when the police officer raise their hand because the training, the uniform and the badge give them the authority of the law to stop vehicles. The legal authority that they have been given does what personal power cannot.

Jesus in his teachings and his call to his people, gives them the power and authority. He delegated his ministry on earth to his followers. And as we live our life as his followers, we need to recognize that God has given us the power and authority to act on his behalf, to go out and invite people into his kingdom and to share the truth of his Word. We need to also understand that Jesus was hated for what he taught, not by the gentiles, but by the Jews, because what he taught did not match up with the power and authority that they had created in their lives and in the world. We will face the same thing when we speak with the power and authority of Jesus in our lives.

Jesus counters this challenge of His authority by the religious leaders with a simple question.

**Matthew 21:24-27**

**<sup>24</sup> Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup> The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup> But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**

Jesus takes the question on authority that the religious leaders had asked of him and shifts the focus of religious authority off himself and unto John the Baptist. In rabbinical courts it was common custom to answer a question with a question. Jesus had answered the question of his authority many times in his teachings. He would willingly answer their question if they would willingly answer his. The question that Jesus asked was meant to broaden the debate, to help clarify the question which they had asked of him.

There is a lesson here for us as Christians, too often in our interactions with the world we get put on the defensive by a question that people ask of us. People will ask us to answer for God and defend God's choices and morality. Instead of being on the defensive, we need to question the assumptions and arrogance from where that question came from. Most often behind these questions there is fault logic or an irrational assumption or presumptions. Before we begin to answer the question, we should look at why we are being asked the question, is there an answer they are seeking and has the question been asked with a purpose, by proving their own



presumptions or ideas. Look into the reason for the question before you answer the question. If it is genuine, answer with patience and careful explanation. If it serves another purpose do not be afraid to question the question and challenge its source.

Jesus's question did this, after all, John's ministry had begun before his and the religious leaders had rejected him before they had even begun to reject Jesus. When Jesus asks about the baptism of John he is speaking of John's whole ministry, including the baptisms of those who had repented from their sins.

The religious leaders very quickly realize that they are caught in a dilemma, between a rock and a hard place we would say. As they discussed it between themselves, they realized that regardless of the answer they give, they cannot win. If they were to say that John's authority came from God, Jesus would then ask them why they had rejected his ministry. The religious leaders had rejected all of John's ministry, they had rejected his clear teachings about the Scripture, his calling out of sin in the world, his clear teachings on who Jesus was especially the fact that John had declared that Jesus was 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' If they accepted that John's ministry was from heaven that had to accept that Jesus was the Messiah, and that did not fit into their plan. They were living the life that they enjoyed, they had worldly power and to recognize that the teachings of John came from God would mean they had to recognize the teachings of Jesus, and that would mean their own lives would come under his justifiable criticism for the way that they went against the Scriptures.

Does this sound familiar? We face this same problem almost every time we are challenged on the truth of Christianity. Ask yourself what standard of proof would this person need to believe? in fact ask them, 'what standard of truth or proof would you need to believe that Christianity is true?' Ask them 'if I can show you this, would you believe?', if they respond with no, then you know that the question is not a genuine question, but instead is built upon some assumption or presumption that they believe.

The dilemma that the religious leaders face is doubly challenging because if they answer that John's authority did not come from heaven they would also be in trouble. If they said that John was not a prophet they would lose face with the gathered crowd, perhaps even face an angry mob who all believed that John was a prophet. While the religious leaders themselves believed that John was not a prophet, they refused to publicly state their beliefs, because doing so would cause them to lose power and authority over the people.

This is why they respond, 'We do not know.' They saw no way to escape the question. The truth is that the religious leaders asked their question not from a genuine interest but instead with the intent of proving Jesus had no authority and was not the messiah. They were looking for a way to declare him a blasphemer and therefore justify putting him to death, which at this point in the Scripture is only a week away. They see that there is no way to answer because they rejected the truth of who Jesus was and they had their own goal, their own law, set first in their minds. Jesus's words to the religious leaders from this point on, become warnings and woes, he declares judgement on them for putting the worldly above the kingdom of heaven. He

tells them that their allegiance with the world prevents them from entering the kingdom of heaven, he calls them blind, he tells them that they are outwardly religious and inwardly wicked, that they honor the prophets in name, but have the same mind of their forefathers who killed the prophets, he calls them a brood of vipers destined for hell.

Jesus knew this was coming, if you can recall back 2 years ago, I talked about Jesus' riding into Jerusalem, just before this confrontation we are looking at today takes place.

**Luke 19:41-44**

**<sup>41</sup> And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup> and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

Jesus wept because he knew that they would reject him. The truth is that there will be people in this world that reject God no matter how much proof they are given. In many places in the bible, we see God withdraw Himself from people. He did so in the face of the unrelenting wickedness of humanity in the days of Noah; he did so in the time of Ephraim and Hosea. And he did so here, just days before his death in Jerusalem, when the religious leaders reject him over and over so that they can hold onto their worldly possessions.

The truth is that there will be people who will ask you questions about your faith with no intent of ever coming to faith. When we face these situations, we need to be willing to withdraw from the question, you cannot answer their question because regardless of how you answer they will maintain their position. We should not feel obligated to answer every question we are answered about God, sometimes it is better to walk away than to get caught up in a debate with someone who has no intent of listening to truth. I have learned that the devil can best accomplish his work by getting good Christians tied up in debates with people who will never believe, because by doing so they are not out doing the great commission we have been given.

Finally, Jesus presents a parable to characterize the two contrasting responses that people of God have to the Gospel.

**Matthew 21:28-32**

**<sup>28</sup> "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup> And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup> And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the**

**prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.**

Notice it is tied back to the vineyard, which we just spoke of last week. A man has two sons, both close to him, there is a bond of familial love between them. The father goes to his sons, in the same way that God comes to us. It is the father who takes the initiative in his relationship with man, not the other way around. What we do and say is a response to what God has already said and done in our lives.

In the parable the father asks his two sons to go and work in the vineyard, and the first son says, 'I will not', but afterward, he changes his mind and goes into the vineyard and gets to work. The second son does the opposite, he responds, 'I go, sir' yet he did not go to the vineyard at all. This implies that the second son never intended to go, he lied to his father to give the false impression of obedience. He pretended to obey, and this is what many people in the church do today, they call themselves Christians when their hearts and actions are in fact far away from what God has called for us to be and do, God knows the truth, he knows our hearts, our thoughts and our actions and they must match our words when we promise to follow God.

When Jesus asks the religious leaders which of these sons did the will of the father they give the obvious answer, 'the first'. The irony is that by saying that it was 'the first' they are actually condemning themselves. The first son at first disobeyed his father, but then went and did his father's will.

The first son represented the people who rejected the teachings of God but later repented their actions and did God's will. Jesus is speaking about the tax collectors and prostitutes, the people who had been living lives that went against God's will, but after hearing the Gospel changed their way of life and lived according to the will of God. Remember that this parable is given in the context of the vineyard, so they did not just believe, they went to work doing the will of God in their lives. There was fruit in the harvest due to their faith.

It has been said that 'One's intentions for the future have more power to shape their life than the experience of the past.' People who hear the Gospel and follow Christ regardless of their past receive salvation. It is the people who say yes to God, but then do not do his will, precisely the people that Jesus is speaking about in Matthew 7 when he talks of the ones who will say they have done works and deeds in His name, yet he does not know them.

This is the point that Jesus makes to the religious leaders gathered when he bluntly tells them that tax collectors and prostitutes will go into heaven before them. They had given the correct answer in words, but they were not living the correct answer in their lives. They claimed to be followers of God, but their lives were not showing that and this is why it was their own response to the question which condemned them. In Matthew 23:2-3 Jesus states this plainly.

**Matthew 23:2-3**

**<sup>2</sup>“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, <sup>3</sup>so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.**

The religious leaders claimed to obey God, but the way that they lived their lives exposed the truth that God was not in their hearts. They claimed to be waiting for the Messiah, and then when he came, they rejected him. They claimed to be followers of God’s but there was no sign of faith in the things they did. This is why the book of James teaches us that faith without works is dead. If we claim faith but there is no fruit of that faith in our lives or in the lives of those around us, then we do not really have faith.

When Jesus tells the gathered religious leaders that tax collectors and prostitutes will go into heaven before them, he is rebuking them in a severe manner. In the eyes of the religious leaders those two groups of people were the worst forms of humanity. Tax collectors were extortioners and traitors to their own people, they served the Romans and supported the Roman occupation of the people’s land. Prostitutes were the epitome of immorality of the time. In the eyes of the religious leaders these two groups were the furthest from the type of people that God would allow into his kingdom.

The religious leaders saw themselves as the exact opposite, the religious elite. The interpreters of God’s law, the keepers of God’s temple. They claimed to give their lives in obedience to God and lived under that self-serving illusion, because they believed that in their position and in the works that they did, God was pleased with them.

Yet here Jesus says the opposite, that those who disobeyed God in their lives, yet truly came to him later in life would be accepted into the kingdom of God, not because of any righteousness, not because of any position, not because of any works, but because they were willing to accept the truth of their sinful nature and acknowledge their need for God’s grace and forgiveness in their lives.

Jesus’s point was that claims to religion do not qualify a person to enter the kingdom of heaven, and gross sin, when repented of, will not keep a person out of heaven. Because of the teachings of Jesus, many people had come to recognize their sinful nature and their need of God’s grace and forgiveness, and they had eagerly responded with repentance when divine favor was offered. Yet the religious leaders relied on their pious claims of authority and legal maneuvering of the courts of the church as evidence of God’s favor in their lives. However, in the end it is only a true faith that saves, claiming to be Christian does not save.

Jesus points this out when he tells the gathered religious leaders that John was a righteous man, and those that they had deemed unsavable had recognized that. Yet the religious leaders who claimed righteousness did not see it in John’s ministry.

This is a powerful lesson for us in the Christian faith today. We should never be like the religious leaders, pointing fingers and presuming we are somehow more righteous than others. We should never presume we are saved, and others are not because the truth is that only God

makes that Judgement. We need to remember that we are called into the vineyard to serve God.

It is a reminder that all who claim to be Christian may not be faithful. The faithful have evidence of faith in their lives, those who were baptized by John changed, the prostitutes and tax collectors repented and changed their way of life, they did not just continue living the way that they had prior to baptism.

It is a reminder that regardless of our intentions, God is calling all sinners to repent and believe in the Gospel, and we need to keep that top of mind in our work in his vineyard. We should not be condemning others but instead seeking to help them understand the Gospel and repent, to turn away from sin and see God as their Lord and Saviour.

We cannot be like the religious leaders and claim him as saviour yet give him no authority in our lives. We need to be like those who were born again in the baptisms of John, people who turned away from their lives of self-serving and sin, people who humbled themselves before God and handed over the authority in their lives to the One True Living God, so that he could deliver them from their sins and grant them eternal life in his glorious kingdom which is to come.

**Grant Us Your Holy Spirit to Protect Us**

Lord God, heavenly Father,  
 through your Son you promised us  
 that whatever we ask in his name you will give us.  
 Keep us in your Word  
 and grant us your Holy Spirit,  
 that he may govern us according to your will,  
 protect us from the power of the devil,  
 from false doctrine and false worship.  
 Defend our lives against all danger  
 and grant us your blessing and peace,  
 that we may in all things  
 know your merciful help  
 and praise and glorify you as our gracious Father  
 now and forever;  
 through your Son,  
 Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one true God, now and forever.

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Easter 5, Rogate

**Hymn: "There is One Gospel"**

There is one Gospel on which I stand  
 For all eternity  
 It is my story, my Father's plan  
 The Son has rescued me  
 Oh what a Gospel, oh what a peace  
 My highest joy and my deepest need  
 Now and forever He is my light  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is one Gospel to which I cling  
 All else I count as loss  
 For there, where justice and mercy meet  
 He saved me on the cross  
 No more I boast in what I can bring  
 No more I carry the weight of sin  
 For He has brought me from death to life  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is one Gospel where hope is found  
 The empty tomb still speaks  
 For death could not keep my Saviour down  
 He lives and I am free  
 Now on my Saviour, I fix my eyes  
 My life is His and His hope is mine!  
 For He has promised I, too, will rise  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And in this Gospel the church is one  
 We do not walk alone  
 We have His Spirit as we press on  
 To lead us safely home  
 And when in glory still I will sing  
 Of this old story that rescued me  
 Praise to my Saviour, the King of life  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And when in glory still I will sing  
 Of this old story that rescued me  
 Praise to my Saviour, the King of life  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
 Praise to my Saviour, the King of life  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
 I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## 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.**

Holy God, we praise you.  
 Let the heavens be joyful,  
 and the earth be glad.  
 We bless you for creating the whole world,  
 for your promises to your people Israel,  
 and for Jesus Christ in whom your fullness dwells.  
 Born of Mary, he shares our life.  
 Eating with sinners, he welcomes us.  
 Guiding his children, he leads us.  
 Visiting the sick, he heals us.  
 Dying on the cross, he saves us.  
 Risen from the dead, he gives new life.  
 Living with you, he prays for us

**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.**

With thanksgiving we take this bread and this cup  
and proclaim the death and resurrection of our Lord.  
Receive our sacrifice of praise.  
Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
that this meal may be  
a communion in the body and blood of our Lord.  
Make us one with Christ  
and with all who share this feast.  
Unite us in faith,  
encourage us with hope,  
inspire us to love,  
that we may serve as your faithful disciples  
until we feast at your table in glory.  
We praise you, eternal God,  
through Christ your Word made flesh,  
in the holy and life-giving Spirit,  
now and forever.  
**Amen.**

### **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 Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread,  
and after giving thanks to God,  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat.  
This is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

**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**

In the same way he took the cup, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it,  
do this in remembrance of me.

**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, O God,  
that through Word and Sacrament  
you have given us your Son,  
who is the true bread from heaven  
and food of eternal life.  
So strengthen us in your service  
that our daily living may show our thanks,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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](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 #321: "Praise to the Lord the Almighty" (V 1,2,4)**

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation!  
My soul, praise God, who alone is your health and salvation!  
Come, all who hear; sisters and brothers draw near,  
joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who in all things so wondrously reigning;  
hides you with sheltering wings, ever gently sustaining!  
Have you not seen how your heart's wishes have been granted  
through God's kind ordaining?

Praise to the Lord! And with all that is in me adoring,  
All who have life and breath, come with glad praises outpouring!  
Let the Amen sound from God's people again;  
now and forever adoring.

#### **Pastoral Prayer**

Loving God,  
together we have heard you speak to us,  
welcoming us, forgiving us,  
teaching us, challenging us.

And we have responded to you  
with praise and confession,  
listening to your Word,  
praying in thanksgiving and intercession,  
and committing ourselves to you anew.  
It has been good to be together.  
As we prepare to leave this place,  
we await your blessing  
so that we may be comforted  
by the assurance that you will  
be with us during the coming week.  
Continue to speak to us as we seek your face.  
Guide us by your Holy Spirit.  
Keep us close to you, we pray,  
in every aspect of our daily lives,  
that we may seek your honor and glory  
wherever we are and in whatever we do.  
We pray, anticipating your blessing,  
for we pray in the name of Jesus,  
our Savior and Lord., who lives and rules  
with you and the Holy Spirit as the one true God. **Amen.**

### **Benediction**

May the grace of God,  
freely given through Christ, our Lord,  
and sufficient for all our needs,  
and may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
who testifies with our spirit  
that we are God's children,  
guide and sustain us this day  
and forever. **Amen.**