

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Do as You Say  
Proper 26  
Matthew 23:1-36**

**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**

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.

**Remembrance Day**

## The Act of Remembrance

### Call to Remembrance

*“At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month the guns fell silent on the Western Front, to bring to an end the First World War. Our nation and commonwealth has recalled that moment through our Armistice and Remembrance events down the decades, decades during which the men and women of our armed services have continued to pay the ultimate sacrifice.*

### ‘Freedom’

It is the Soldier, not the reporter  
 Who has given us the freedom of the press.  
 It is the Soldier, not the poet  
 Who has given us the freedom of speech.  
 It is the Soldier, not the peace camp organizer  
 Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.  
 It is the Soldier,  
     who serves beneath the Flag  
     whose coffin is draped by the Flag  
     who allows the protester to burn the Flag  
 It is the Soldier, not the politician  
 Who has given his  
     blood  
     his body  
     his life  
 The Soldier, who has given these freedoms.

### Scripture

#### MICAH 4:1-5

**It shall come to pass in the latter days  
 that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
     shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
 and it shall be lifted up above the hills;  
     and peoples shall flow to it,  
<sup>2</sup> and many nations shall come, and say:  
     “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
 to the house of the God of Jacob,  
     that he may teach us his ways  
 and that we may walk in his paths.”  
     For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
 and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

<sup>3</sup> He shall judge between many peoples,  
 and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;  
 and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
 and their spears into pruning hooks;  
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
 neither shall they learn war anymore;  
<sup>4</sup> but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,  
 and no one shall make them afraid,  
 for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.  
<sup>5</sup> For all the peoples walk  
 each in the name of its god,  
 but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God  
 forever and ever.

### **The Ode**

They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old;  
 Age shall not weary them. Nor the years condemn.  
 At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
 We will remember them.  
**We will remember them.**

### **In Flanders Fields**

In Flanders fields, the poppies blow  
 between the crosses, row on row,  
 that mark our places; and in the sky  
 the larks, still bravely singing, fly  
 scarce heard amongst the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
 we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
 loved and were loved, and now we lie  
 in Flanders fields.

Take up your quarrel with the foe;  
 to you from failing hands we throw  
 the torch; be yours to hold it high.  
 If ye break faith with us who die  
 we shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
 in Flanders fields.

**Dr John McCrae, 1914/1915**

*Let us remember before God those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.*

**In Memory of:  
World War 1**

George Bothwell  
Walter A Ferrier  
Graham Howie  
Donald McPhail  
Eric T. Spalding  
Harold Stone  
Edwin D. Wilson

Killed in Action in The Great War of 1914-1918

**World War 2**

Fred Burchell  
Kenneth Davis  
Norman Davis  
Charles Donovan  
John McLeod Hogg  
Lorne Patterson

Killed in Action in The Great War of 1939-1945

**The Last Post**

**National Anthem**

**O Canada!**

Our home and native land! True patriot love  
in all thy sons command

With glowing hearts  
we see thee rise,  
the true north strong and free;

From far and wide,

O Canada,  
we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land  
glorious and free!

O Canada!  
We stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada!  
We stand on guard for thee.

**Prayer**

*Lord God of the nations,  
whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace,  
have mercy on our broken and divided world.  
Pour out your peace into the hearts of all,  
that all races and peoples may learn  
to live as members of one family  
in obedience to your law.  
Almighty and eternal God,  
from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,  
either by death or life:  
hear our prayers and thanksgivings  
for all whom we remember this day.  
Fulfil in us, as in them,  
the purpose of your love;  
and bring us all to your eternal joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

**Opening Hymn #330: "O God Our Help in Ages Past" (V 1,5,6)**

O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home.

Time, like an ever rolling stream,  
bears all our years away.  
They fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,

still be our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home.

### **Call to Confession**

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

### **Prayer of Confession**

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgment.  
You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart.  
Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.  
Your sins are pardoned.  
The penalty is paid.  
Thanks be to God.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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

Forever and ever. Amen.

**Music Ministry: “God’s Table Divine” Choir**

**Responsive Reading**

**Psalm 107:1-9**

**Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever!**

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,  
whom he has redeemed from trouble

3 and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.

**4 Some wandered in desert wastes,  
finding no way to a city to dwell in;**

5 hungry and thirsty,  
their soul fainted within them.

6 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.

**7 He led them by a straight way  
till they reached a city to dwell in.**

8 Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

9 For he satisfies the longing soul,  
and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

**Children’s Hymn #655: “Give Me Oil in My Lamp” (V 1,2,4)**

Give me oil in my lamp; keep me burning;  
give me oil in my lamp, I pray.

Give me oil in my lamp; keep me burning;  
keep me burning till the break of day.

Refrain:

Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,  
sing hosanna to the Servant King;  
sing hosanna, sing hosanna,  
sing hosanna, let us sing!

Give me joy in my heart; keep me praising;  
 give me joy in my heart, I pray.  
 Give me joy in my heart; keep me praising;  
 keep me praising till the break of day. (Refrain)

Give me love in my heart; keep me serving;  
 give me love in my heart, I pray.  
 Give me love in my heart; keep me serving;  
 keep me serving till the break of day. (Refrain)

### Children's Lesson

#### Prayer for illumination (Congregant Prepared)

#### Scripture

##### Matthew 23:1-36

**23** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <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. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. <sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, <sup>6</sup> and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues <sup>7</sup> and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. <sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

<sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. <sup>15</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

<sup>16</sup> "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?

<sup>18</sup> And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.



<sup>23</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup> Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

<sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

## Sermon

For the past few weeks, we have seen Jesus in confrontation with the religious leaders of the time. From the time that the religious leaders confront Jesus’s authority to speak and teach in the temple, Jesus has been instructing them on what it means to be a follower of God. Through the parable of the two sons, the parable of the tenants, the parable of the wedding feast, as well as the confrontations that the religious leaders brought to him about taxes, resurrection, and the greatest commandment, Jesus has constantly been telling all who will listen that there is a difference between claiming to be one of God’s chosen and actually being one of God’s people.

Yet even with all of this instruction, some through parables and some through teachings, the religious leaders still fail to recognize that they are in danger of not entering the kingdom of heaven. Even when Jesus has directly told them that they are no longer keeping the covenant that they have with God, even as he explained to them exactly the things that they would do in parables, they refused to recognize the road that they were walking upon, because of their own vanity, their own pride and their own sense of power and prestige.

So, in the Scripture we read today, Jesus speaks in perhaps the clearest possible way, he no longer uses parables or teachings. He comes out and directly speaks the truth about the religious leaders within the church who are not adhering to the teachings of God. In the Seven woes given to the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus is no longer veiling the truth, he is speaking to them and to the people gathered to listen directly about the hypocrisy that exists in the lives of people who are religious but not saved.

Hypocrisy is one of the most common criticisms of the Christian community. Ask most non-Christians why they do not want to be Christians and you will hear 'there are too many hypocrites there'. Even Ghandhi, a practicing Hindu, who tried to attend a Christian service and was told he could not enter once said **'If it weren't for Christians, I'd be a Christian?'**

Hypocrisy is one of the most powerful ways that the devil has to push people away from Christianity and push people away from God. So as Christians, how are we meant to keep hypocrisy from creeping into our life and our ways? The truth is that we are all hypocrites in some way and at some time. Not one of us can claim to live a perfect Christian life, we have all broken the ten commandments, we have all lied, stolen, idolized a sport, athlete, musician, game, celebrity, or had impure thoughts, and as a teenager we all dishonored our parents at least once.

So how do we as Christian begin to discover our hypocrisy and push it out of our life? In the woes to the religious leaders, Jesus points out how hypocrisy exists within Christians and how we can work at removing it with the help of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus's day a hypocrite was a stage actor, they were someone who was playing a part pretending to be something or someone which they obviously were not. When the religious leaders heard all of the parables and teachings that Jesus had laid out upon them, they heard Jesus calling them hypocrites, they heard him condemning their faith which was not genuine. In all of the teachings we have looked at over the past few weeks, Jesus has told the religious leaders and those gathered listening that there is a significant difference between real faith and the false, hypocritical faith that many held.

The truth is that false, hypocritical faith is just as much a problem in our world today as it was when Jesus, the words we are looking at today. Many people merely pretend to have faith, they go to church each Sunday and put on a show for those gathered there. They are lured into hypocrisy by the world and all of the traps that are laid out to tempt people away from true faith.

Jesus begins his woes by reminding those gathered that the religious leaders were to be respected because of the position that they had in teaching the Word of God. They were responsible for taking the Word of God seriously and sharing truthfully what that Word meant and what it called for in the lives of the people who came to them to learn. The religious leaders enjoyed this position because it gave them a sense of authority

due to their knowledge. Jesus tells those listening that they are to listen to the teachings of the religious leaders and obey the instruction that is given. However, he also tells them not to live their own lives like the religious leaders, a classic example of 'do what I say, and not what I do'. The problem with the religious teachers was that while the truthfully taught the Word of God, they did not apply that same Word in their lives.

The real problem lay in their sense of authority and superiority. They thought they just knew and understood what God wanted better than anyone else and that somehow allowed them to live by a different ruleset.

The religious leaders knew how they were called to live according to the Scriptures, and they expected all of the people to live by those rules, even if they could not, or did not want to live by them themselves. They were more than happy to tell everyone else how to be a faithful servant of God, they just did not want to live that way themselves, because it would mean giving up their own selfishness. 'Do as I say, not as I do'.

Hypocrites love to tell others what they are doing wrong in their lives and explain to others how they should be living. This is a problem that plagues the church, people pointing out the sins of others without looking at the sins that exist in their own lives first, this is why Jesus told us to take care of the log in our own eye before we worry about the speck in a brother's eye.

Christians can fall into a pattern of hypocrisy very easily, especially in the modern world where we are surrounded by a sin filled society that just seems to be moving further and further from God and his teachings. However, we need to check our hypocrisy, we need to remember that we should not be running around telling everyone to remove sin from their lives, unless we are actively removing sin from our own lives.

We need to be especially careful of this when it comes to things which are not clearly sinful. It is ok for people to dress the way that they want when they come to church, within reason, it is ok for someone to have an alcoholic drink with their dinner or out with friends, within reason. There are some things which are clearly sinful in the Scriptures, the ten commandments for example, and we can confidently tell someone that they should avoid that sin in their lives. However, for other aspects of life it is not quite as clear. Some people have been raised in churches that taught dancing, singing, or even going to a movie is sinful.

The key to understanding this is reminding ourselves that we are all servants of God.

#### **Romans 14:1-4**

**As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. <sup>2</sup> One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.**

We should be focused on our own growth in faith and obedience. We should be supporting our brothers and sisters in Christ in their own journey of faith and obedience. And that means we need to be willing to confront them about the sin in their lives, but we also need to be truthful about the sin in our own lives. Not a single one of us is perfectly sinless, and we should never act like we are. We also need to remember in the eyes of God all sin is equal, even though man may define some sins as worse than others, God sees mass murder and a single white lie as sin.

This is incredibly humbling, because once we acknowledge our own sinfulness, we begin to get a better understanding of what Jesus did for each of us when he died upon the cross and shed his blood for our sins. And it is that knowledge of his grace and mercy that help us go out and show that same grace and mercy not only to our brother and sisters in Christ but also to the lost people in this world that are all around us each and every day.

The second problem that Jesus address with the religious leaders is their pride. They loved to be praised and held in high regard by others. They were people who always wanted to appear superior to those around them, this is why they wanted to walk in a manner that made it appear like they were floating, this is why they wore expensive robes, so that they would stand out from the rest.

It is fine for Christians to have nice things, you can have an expensive car, a big house, fancy designer clothing, but when you buy those things for the purpose of impressing others you have become a hypocrite. When you want to be seen as something you are not, when you value the opinions of the people in this world higher than your relationship with God and helping others you have become like the religious leaders of Jesus's day.

Jesus reminds those listening that we are not to be filled with pride, instead we are to be humble servants, of God and of our fellow human beings.

**Matthew 23:11-12**

**<sup>11</sup> The greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.**

Next, he speaks of the desire of the religious leaders to place themselves above others in all things. The religious leaders would often criticize others who they felt were not as Holy as they were. They would intentionally seek out and speak about the faults of others, while ignoring their own faults.

They would focus on the sin of a person or group of people while overlooking the sin in their lives, as a way to pass over dealing with their own nature.

Once again humility is the answer to this problem.

**Philippians 2:3**

**<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**

We need to get off our own high horse, we need to stop trying so hard to lift ourselves up in the eyes of others by pushing the others down through criticism and gossip. We need to learn to see others as children of God worthy of our love, grace, and mercy regardless of the life and lifestyle that they live.

The modern world has mastered the ability to do the exact opposite of what Jesus asks of his people. We live in a world where we are told to glorify ourselves and the things we love while we fight against anything that goes against the life and lifestyle we want to enjoy. They twist words, change their meaning, create new language and new ideas all for the purposes of justifying the things we want and the pleasures we enjoy. They take the Scripture and interpret it in a completely new way, disregarding the teachings of the ones who walked with Christ and the earliest of the church fathers just because they want to find a way to not call what they do a sin.

The religious leaders in Jesus's time did the same things.

Mark 7 teaches us:

**Mark 7 :6-13**

**<sup>6</sup> And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,**

**" 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;**

**<sup>7</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'**

**<sup>8</sup> You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."**

**<sup>9</sup> And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'**

**<sup>11</sup> But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban" ' (that is, given to God)— <sup>12</sup> then you no longer**

**permit him to do anything for his father or mother, <sup>13</sup> thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”**

We live in a world that is filled with double standards. We tell others that they should not say, do or think something, yet we excuse ourselves for the exact same behavior. People will criticize someone for not attending church on a Sunday and then not see that same person at every bible study or fellowship event that is held within the church because they skip those events. People will say more people need to give to the church, or volunteer at the church, without doing so themselves.

Christians need to be wary of this behavior, we need to look at things that are promoted in this world as good and see if they are Biblical. Are they intended to bring people together, or do they instead push people further apart by bringing in worldly divisions. Christians need to be willing to call their own sin what it is SIN, they can not call it a quirk, idiosyncrasy, problem, or preference.

Christians need to be willing to come to God honestly, and confess their sins, their faults. The Bible tells us to confess our sins to one another, so that we can support one another in overcoming the things in life that pull us away from humbly serving God, our brothers and sisters and this world.

Then Jesus speaks about how we prioritize our lives. None of us really like when the topic of priorities comes up in the church, because every time it does, we all begin to realize just how far down our list of priorities God and Church actually are. I sat down with some other ministers in this community just a week ago and we all shared how congregations fluctuate in numbers week to week depending on what events are occurring around town, whether it's a sports season, or the playoffs are on.

The religious leaders of Jesus's day thought they had their priorities right. They had their own special seating in the synagogues up at the front. They believed that they followed God's laws perfectly because of all of the laws they had instituted in their lives. Instead, they skipped over the meaning of the Scripture, so that they could feel like they obeyed it. They did not see the bigger more important picture of loving their fellow human beings, because they were too busy debating who exactly was a neighbor.

In the Scripture we are given some wonderful direction in the book of Galatians

**Galatians 5:22-23**

**<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

**<sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the**

**Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

God will lead us through his Holy Spirit to the things he is calling for us to do in this world if we open ourselves up to his Word. The Holy Spirit will lead us to the things we are to prioritize as long as we are sensitive enough to follow His lead.

The biggest issue we have as Christians is that we tell everyone that we are placing God first in our lives, and then our lives do not match our words. We all know of people who come to church on a Sunday and nod along with the sermon, join in the fellowship and then go out that week and live a worldly sinful life. We all know of people who say amen to all of the good teachings and then break them that same day.

The problem is that the world is watching, and they see this type of behavior is too common within those who call themselves Christians. The message and the action do not match. They speak of grace, mercy and forgiveness and then cuss out the person that cut them off in traffic, or yell at the clerk at the checkout who is not going as fast as they would like.

The Fruit of the Spirit is the answer, we all need a heart that matches our words. The world tells us that you can dress up as anything you want in this world, you can choose to be called whatever you want, but the truth is that no matter how much I want my dog to be a cat, she is always going to be a dog.

The same is true for who we are and how we behave, unless there is a change in your heart, we will continue to behave in the way we always have, sin will dominate our heart until God changes our heart, until the Fruit of the Holy Spirit begins to work in our lives.

God changes who we are into who he calls for us to be. This is what baptism represents.

**Ezekiel 36:25-27**

**<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

God wants to change us so that the things we prioritize in our lives match the words we speak. He changes us right from the core of our being through the work of His Holy Spirit, giving us all of the Fruit of the Spirit so that we can serve him in his Kingdom.

Finally, Jesus speaks on the sins of the past. We live in a world that is constantly revising history, we live in a world that tries to apply the teachings, ideals, and situation of this world throughout all of history, we think if we were there, we would always do the right thing.

The Pharisees did this, they were more than willing to admit the sins of the past, even if they ignored their own sins in the present.

We see it all over the place in this world today, people who will happily point out the sin of others while presenting themselves as sinless. We see Christians who look at the Scripture and condemn the people who sacrificed their children to Moloch in the pagan world and then we see the same person out there talking about the problems of unwanted pregnancies and the financial, emotional, and bodily strain that it places on the woman who does not want a child. Claiming that no woman should be forced to carry an unwanted child to term.

But the truth of the Scripture is that abortion is murder.

Just like the Pharisees looking at the sins of the Israelites in the past and refusing to recognize that same sin in their own lives. Just like the people of this world who do not realize that the dominance of sin in our culture is no different than the way sin dominates the culture of the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the French, the English, the Russians, and every other empire that has risen and fallen throughout mankind's history.

Most of us are willing to share the sins of our past, our wild pre-Christian days, however when it comes to sharing with others the sins that we are wrestling with on a day-to-day basis we are silent. We don't like to admit that we still sin.

Don't worry if this is you, because you stand with some of the greatest heroes of the Scripture. David wrestled with sin throughout his entire life, he was a liar, an adulterer, and a murderer. Yet in the end he realized what was required of him and he came to God and confessed his sinful ways and asked for God's forgiveness.

He repented and tried to change his ways and with the help of the Holy Spirit he became the man that God intended for him to be.

The same could be said of Paul in the New Testament. He was a murderer and persecutor of Christians, as self-described Jew of Jews. Yet when Jesus called him, he was radically changed and became a leader of the movement that establish the church for all of eternity. A man whose heart was forever changed by a God that showed him love, grace and mercy.



Christians can learn a lot from the woes given to the religious leaders about how we can live a life of faith that is not filled with hypocrisy, sure we will all have times we stumble, we will all have times we outright fail and are hypocrites, but the idea is that it should be something we are seeking to remove from our life and our faith.

We do this by holding one another accountable for our faith, accountable for our words and accountable for our behavior. This is why fellowship and friendship within the church is so important. This fellowship allows others to approach us when they have concerns, this fellowship allows church discipline to take place and a loving, caring environment for people to wrestle with the things that draw them away from God without fear of judgement or exclusion.

We do this by going back to Scripture when we face choices and instead of following the crowd or the culture, we make choices that reflect the Word of God. We do this by thinking about how the actions we take and the words we choose influence the world around us, we need to ask ourselves: Are we reflecting the ways of the world or are we acting as the Salt and Light of the Lord?

Paul teaches that the opposite of hypocrisy is sincerity, it is being pure and blameless.

**Philippians 1:9-11**

**<sup>9</sup> And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

We need to be transparent; our words should be the same as our actions. We need to be genuine, speaking the truth to everyone we meet, about the things of this world and about the Word of God. Our love of neighbor cannot be just for show, it needs to come from our hearts. We need to be humble, to walk as servants of God in this world, not seeing ourselves as superior to others, but to see ourselves as the ones called to serve. We need to do as we say while we live out our lives as the Salt and Light of God's Word to those who are still lost and struggling in the darkness.

Let us pray,

**Look upon Our Needs**

*Lord God almighty,  
you do not disregard  
the cries of the poor,  
and you do not despise  
the longing of troubled hearts.  
Look upon our prayers  
which we bring to you  
in our needs*

*and hear us graciously,  
 so that everything  
 that the devil  
 and the sinful world set against us  
 comes to nothing,  
 and that they may be converted  
 by your good counsel,  
 so that we may be undisturbed  
 by any affliction,  
 thank you in your congregation,  
 and praise you at all times;  
 through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Amen.*

**Source: Martin Luther, the German Litany,**

**Hymn: "O The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus!"**

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
 vast, unmeasured, boundless, free,  
 rolling as a mighty ocean  
 in its fullness over me.  
 Underneath me, all around me,  
 is the current of Thy love;  
 leading onward, leading homeward  
 to Thy glorious rest above.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
 spread His praise from shore to shore!  
 How He loveth, ever loveth,  
 changeth never, nevermore!  
 How He watcheth o'er His loved ones,  
 died to call them all His own;  
 how for them He intercedeth,  
 watcheth o'er them from the throne.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
 love of every love the best;  
 'tis an ocean vast of blessing,  
 'tis a haven sweet of rest.  
 O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
 'tis heav'n of heav'ns to me;  
 and it lifts me up to glory,  
 for it lifts me up to Thee.

## Communion

### Invitation to the Table

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

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

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

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

### The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you;  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts;  
**We lift them up to the Lord.**

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

We acclaim you, holy God, glorious in power;  
 your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love.  
 You formed us in your own image,  
 giving the whole world into our care  
 so that, in obedience to you, our creator,  
 we might rule and serve all your creatures.  
 When our disobedience took us far from you,  
 you did not abandon us to the power of death.  
 In your mercy you came to our help,  
 so that in seeking you we might find you.  
 Again and again you called us into covenant with you,  
 and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.  
 Almighty God, you loved the world so much  
 that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior.  
 Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,

he lived as one of us, yet was without sin.  
 To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation;  
 to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy.  
 To fulfill your purpose, he gave himself up to death  
 and, rising from the grave, destroyed death  
 and made the whole creation new.  
 And that we might live no longer for ourselves  
 but for him who died and rose for us,  
 God sent the Holy Spirit,  
 God's first gift for all who believe,  
 to complete God's work in the world,  
 and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.  
 When the hour had come for him to be glorified  
 by you, his heavenly Father,  
 having loved his own who were in the world,  
 he loved them to the end:  
 at supper with them he took bread,  
 and after giving thanks to you,  
 he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,  
 "Take, eat. This is my body, which is given for you.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me."  
 After supper he took the cup, saying,  
 "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
 shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins.  
 Whenever you drink it,  
 do it for the remembrance of me."  
 Holy God, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption.  
 Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead,  
 proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand,  
 awaiting his coming in glory,  
 and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us,  
 this bread and this cup,  
 we praise you and we bless you.

**We praise you, we bless you,  
 we give thanks to you,  
 and we pray to you, Lord, our God.**

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

**The Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

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

### **Communion**

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

Living God,  
 send your Holy Spirit upon us  
 as we share your heavenly meal;  
 nourish us with your grace  
 so that we are strengthened  
 to do your work in this world;  
 unite us with you so that we are renewed;  
 and join us with your covenant people  
 throughout time and space  
 so that all divisions will be healed.  
 May we gratefully and joyfully remember that Jesus, our Savior,  
 lived, died, and rose to give us new life  
 and make us new creations in him.  
 May we live in the hope  
 we discover through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Breaking of the bread**

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

**Taking of the bread**

Take and eat. This is the body of Christ, which is [given] for you. Do this, remembering him.

**Distribution of the cup**

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

**Drinking of the cup**

This cup is the new covenant sealed by Christ's blood, which was shed that the sins of many might be forgiven. Drink from it, all of you.

**Prayer after Communion**

We thank and praise you, Jesus Christ,  
for these gifts of bread and wine,  
signs of your great sacrifice for us  
and, by your Spirit's presence and power,  
a means for us to commune with you.  
We eat this bread and drink this cup  
to refresh our hearts,  
to strengthen our faith,  
and to rouse our hope  
that soon we shall take our places at your heavenly banquet  
to eat and drink with you and all you have redeemed.  
For all your gifts, we bless you, Lord.  
Above all, your heavenly food,  
pardoning grace, and life-giving Word  
motivate us to sing that you are good. 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 #350: "To God be the Glory"**

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

Refrain:

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord,  
 Let the earth hear his voice!  
 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
 Let the people rejoice!  
 O come to the Father through Jesus the Son  
 and give him the glory, great things he has done!

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

**Pastoral Prayer**

All knowing Father  
 We gather in this season of remembrance,  
 grateful that you hold each one of us in your memory and your mystery,  
 now and for all the time to come.  
 Today, we remember all those who have served to uphold justice and freedom  
 in the wars of the last century,  
 in conflicts of our own generation,  
 and in peacekeeping and relief efforts around the world.

Today especially we pray for those who have died in this service  
 and for those who carry scars on body and soul, having returned from conflict.  
 We remember their courage  
 and we pray for their families who still ache for lives surrendered at a great cost.

Father, we remember before you today the victims of conflict,  
 hiding in forgotten corners of the world, longing for safety and peace.  
 Especially we pray for people in Israel and Gaza who fear for their lives and their future.

We also remember the victims of violence in our own country,  
still fearful and uncertain about what the future holds for them.  
Give us the mind to pray for their protection and recovery.

Father, we remember those around us who struggle day by day;  
those who must cope with the fear of forgetting those who matter most to them,  
and those who face the fear of being forgotten.  
Help us remember to reach out in comfort and support  
so that no one is forgotten.

Father, we remember those around us who carry on  
under the burden of sad and hard memories;  
those weighed down by grief, disappointment, anger, pain, and loss.  
Inspire us to offer a listening ear and an understanding heart whenever we can.

Father of all of eternity,  
help us to remember you day by day.  
Keep us prepared to shine the light of your gospel into the dark corners of this world  
so that hope is renewed, and need is exposed  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit  
as the one true living God and in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

### **Benediction**

May God the Father bless you,  
God the Son heal you,  
God the Holy Spirit give you strength.  
May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard your body, save your soul,  
and bring you safely to his heavenly country, where he lives and reigns for ever and  
ever.