

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
 Sunday, February 4th, 2024
 Rev. Gerry Gallant

How to Be a Servant
 Fifth Sunday of Epiphany
 1 Corinthians 9:19–23

Welcome

Announcements

Order for the Dedication of an Organ

Everybody stands

Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, whom the hosts of heaven continually adore graciously receive this Organ for Your glory and worship in this Your House; and grant that we who sing Your praises in this present world may be found worthy to praise You with Your saints in that world which is to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then the Minister, facing towards the Organ, says.

In the faith of Jesus Christ, we bless, dedicate, and set apart this Instrument of Music to the service of Almighty God, to the glory and honour of Him whose mercy endures forever: in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Lord, open our lips.

And our mouths shall show forth Your praise.

Then is sung by all the people, with organ accompaniment, this being the first use of the Instrument in the Service—

Praise GOD from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below,

Praise Him above ye heavenly host,

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then are said these prayers following—

We give You thanks, O Lord God, that it has pleased You, by Your good Spirit, to put into the hearts of Your servants the desire to set up this Organ and thus enrich the worship and advance the goodly order of Your temple. Bless, O Lord, them, and their families, and graciously accept this gift at their hands, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, who art Yourself eternal love and goodness, and from whom alone cometh whatsoever we give and dedicate to You ; grant that all they who within this holy place shall offer up the sacrifice of praise to You may glorify You not only with their lips but in their lives, so that, enjoying Your favour here on earth, they may hereafter attain to everlasting joy ; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

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. Amen.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God, our guide and guardian,
 you have led us apart from the busy world into the quiet of your house.
 Grant us grace to worship you in spirit and in truth,
 to the comfort of our souls
 and the upbuilding of every good purpose and holy desire.
 Enable us to do more perfectly the work to which you have called us,
 that we may not fear the coming of night,
 when we shall surrender into your hands
 the tasks which you have committed to us.
 So may we worship you not with our lips only at this hour,
 but in word and deed all the days of our lives,
 through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Children's VIDEO: "Jesus Loves Me"

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, in your faithful love,
 in your great tenderness wipe away my offences.
 wash me thoroughly from my guilt,
 purify me from my sin.
 For I am well aware of my offences,
 my sin is constantly in mind.**

**Against you, you alone, I have sinned,
 I have done what you see to be wrong,
 that you may show your saving justice when you pass sentence,
 and your victory may appear when you give judgment,
 remember, I was born guilty,
 a sinner from the moment of conception.**

**But you delight in sincerity of heart,
 and in secret you teach me wisdom.
 God, create in me a clean heart,
 renew within me a resolute spirit,
 do not thrust me away from your presence,
 do not take away from me your spirit of holiness.
 Give me back the joy of your salvation,
 sustain in me a generous spirit.**

Lord, open my lips,
 and my mouth will speak out your praise.
 Sacrifice gives you no pleasure,
 burnt offering you do not desire.
 Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit,
 a broken, contrite heart you never scorn.
 In the name of our Savior Jesus Christ we pray,
 Amen.

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.

Responsive Reading

Psalms 147:7-11

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
 make melody to our God on the lyre!

**8 He covers the heavens with clouds;
 he prepares rain for the earth;
 he makes grass grow on the hills.**

9 He gives to the beasts their food,
 and to the young ravens that cry.

**10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
 nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,**

**11 but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
 in those who hope in his steadfast love.**

Hymn # 370: "Hallelujah! Sing to Jesus"

Hallelujah! sing to Jesus,
 his the sceptre, his the throne;
 Hallelujah! his the triumph,
 his the victory alone.
 Hark! the songs of peaceful Zion
 thunder like a mighty flood;
 Jesus out of every nation
 has redeemed us by his blood.

Hallelujah! not as orphans
 are we left in sorrow now;
 Hallelujah! he is near us,
 faith believes, nor questions how.
 Though the cloud from sight received him
 when the forty days were o'er,
 shall our hearts forget his promise,
 "I am with you evermore"?

Hallelujah! King eternal,
 thee the Lord of lords we own:
 Hallelujah! born of Mary,
 earth thy footstool, heaven thy throne.
 Thou within the veil hast entered,
 robed in flesh, our great High Priest,
 thou on earth both priest and victim
 in the eucharistic feast.

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

1 Corinthians 9:19–23

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Sermon

What does it take to bring the message of the Gospel to others? Over the past few weeks, we have discussed how we need to be willing to go to others, and we need to stand strong in the truth and yet still be flexible in the non-essentials. Yet there is still another aspect of evangelism, sharing the Word of God with others that Paul has to teach us in his letter to the Corinthians. We have to be willing to do whatever it takes to reach others.

Years ago, Leighton Ford was speaking at one of the Billy Graham open-air crusades in Halifax. Billy Graham was going to be speaking the next night but had arrived a day early. So, he decided to attend Leighton Ford's message. So that he would not be recognized, he pulled his hat down low and put on a pair of sunglasses as he found a place on the grass to listen to the Word of God. He ended up sitting behind an older gentleman that seemed to be very intently listening to the message. When Leighton finished up and gave his altar call, Billy noticed that the old man did not move, so he decided to do a little of his own evangelism. He politely tapped the man on the shoulder and said, 'Would you like to receive Christ? I'll be glad to walk down with you if you want me to.' The old man looked him up and down, thought it over for a moment, and then said, "Naw, I think I'll just wait till the big gun comes tomorrow night."

This is the problem that we have with evangelism in this world. We believe it is the job of the 'big guns' to bring the message of the Gospel to the world. It's the evangelists, the pastors, the Bible study teachers' job to go out and tell others about Jesus Christ. However, the Bible is actually very clear on this matter, it is the job of every person that has received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour to bring the message of salvation to those around them.

The first thing we learn from Paul's letter to the Corinthians is that we need to be willing to do whatever it takes to bring the message of God to those around us. If you were here last week, I hope that you remember Paul said we have to be willing to give up our freedoms, our rights if they could potentially make a fellow Christian stumble in their walk with God. This week he is going to take that same idea and apply it to those who are still not walking with the Lord in their lives.

He speaks about how we are called to serve others, and that means at times we may have to give up those rights and freedoms that we cling to in our lives in order to bring the message of the Gospel into the lives of those who are still lost in this world.

1 Corinthians 9:19

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

Being a servant to all is a much more difficult task than we think. Being willing to give up my rights and freedoms for the sake of my brothers and sisters in Christ is already a daunting thought, and now to think that there may be times when I am asked to give up those same things for others is unimaginable.

Yet the truth is that when it comes to sharing the message of the Gospel with others in the world, our willingness to sacrifice our rights and freedoms is directly related to our level of commitment to sharing the Lord. Paul reached people all over the world with his message because he was willing to sacrifice any aspect of himself that prevented him from sharing the Gospel with the lost people of this world.

But it is hard to be like Paul, we all have our own way of living and things that we are comfortable and uncomfortable with in this world.

Most of us are pretty stuck in our own ways and we do not want to change, or to do things or go places that make us uncomfortable. Many of us believe we have earned the right to relax, to get away from the world, to take all of the money and financial freedom we have and use it for our own pleasure and purposes. Many of us feel we have the right to set our own schedules, live our life according to our wishes and most of all to not be bothered by people when we do not want to be bothered.

Yet Paul is telling us that if we want to do the Lord's work and bring the message of the Gospel to those who are still lost in this world this is exactly what we need to be willing to do. We need to be willing to go places and do things which make us uncomfortable with friends and with strangers. We need to be willing to give of our time and finances, even when it means we lose out on a vacation or hobby to bring the message of the Gospel to others. We need to understand that at times our schedules will need to be shifted, changed, or completely redrawn because of others, and most of all we need to accept that being bothered by others to share the Gospel is not a bother but a blessing in our lives. We have to be willing to sacrifice the ways we are comfortable living to bring the Word of God to the worldly.

Paul does not stop there, however.

1 Corinthians 9:20–22

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

Paul was a Jew, born and raised. He grew up following all of the Jewish customs. He was taught by the Rabbis; his friends were all Jews.

In his letter to the Philippians, he says this about himself.

Philippians 3:4-6

⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Paul was a Jew among the Jews. He had mentored under a great Rabbi by the name of Gamaliel and then he had become a teacher himself. He was out hunting down Christians as Saul of Tarsus, when he had an encounter with the Lord, and it changed his life forever. God took Saul who was comfortable in his Jewish Culture, his Jewish schedule, his Jewish lifestyle and thrust him into being the messenger of the Gospel to the gentiles that he had so zealously persecuted.

Paul had to learn very quickly to adapt and to connect to people and cultures which were not only radically different from the one he had been familiar with his entire life, but also went against many of the things that he had been raised to believe.

Paul was a Jew when he was with the Jews and a Gentile when he was with the Gentiles. As he said he became all things to all people, so that he might save some.

However, this does not mean that Paul was like a jellyfish with no spine. His life was still spiritually, morally, and ethically grounded in the Scriptures. He lived his life outside the strict laws of the Jews when he associated with the gentiles, but he also remained under the law of God and of Christ.

So how did he do this? How do we do this? How do we connect with the culture of the world without compromising the Word of God and his law in our life? Paul's own life has some lessons on the 'how-to's' for us.

Firstly, as Christians we have to recognize that it is very easy for us to do what the Jews in Paul's day were doing, isolating ourselves within our own groups. Christians tend to do this, we only have Christian friends, we shop at Christian businesses, we go to Christian schools, we only read Christian literature, we only listen to Christian music. There is nothing wrong with this, however we need to acknowledge that when we begin to isolate ourselves from the 'pagan' world around us, we also limit our ability to connect with and evangelize to the people who live in that world.

If you read the book of Acts, you can easily see that this is not the way that Paul lived his life. He was familiar with many of the customs and practices of peoples outside of the Jewish culture. He knew the things that people of other cultures and backgrounds were familiar with and he uses them as ways of pointing people in the direction of the Gospel, he uses examples from their lives and their culture to get the message of God across to them more easily.

In fact, if we look at the Gospels, that is the very same thing that God did when he sent his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ into the world to be an example for us. Christ even tells us this in the book of John.

John 17:18

¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

So, like Paul, we need to learn to be students of the culture around us. We need to know and understand the chaos of the world and look for ways that we can use it to communicate and relate with people who are lost.

We also need to be like Paul and learn that even though we are learning about the cultures around us, we cannot imitate everything that they do. Remember he said that while he became like one outside the law to those outside the law, he did not forsake the law of God. Paul was making it clear that we are to walk in the world, but not in the ways of the world.

In the book of Romans Paul said.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

So even though we learn about the culture and practices, even though we may take part in hobbies, movies and music that is not Christian so that we can better connect with the world around us and understand their way of life, we do not forsake the Scriptures to do so. We need to stand firm in the truth even when we take part in the world around us.

Paul is reminding us that we cannot bring people to God unless we are willing to go to those people. As I have said before you cannot catch any fish if you cast the net inside the boat.

And we cannot expect those who have not yet heard the Gospel to behave like Christians. People are driven by their own desires, until the Holy Spirit begins its work in them. How can we expect them to come to know God and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives if we never make an effort to tell them the Good News.

Now this does not mean that you need to go hang out in a bar on a Friday night so that you can evangelize. What it means is that you need to learn to evangelize in those places where you are already going in your life. At work, in your hobbies, while you are on vacation, or standing in line at the market, when an opportunity presents itself to share the Word of God, do not hesitate. Get a little bit uncomfortable and you will find that the more you do it the easier it gets.

Finally, Paul teaches us that we need to find ways to share the Gospel, without changing or watering down its message. God never changes, God's Word never changes, and the Gospel never changes.

Do not ever change the Word of God to make it more palatable for others, we need to be uncompromising in the truth of the scripture. When you begin to compromise in the truth of the Word of God it is a very slippery slope.

However, that does not mean that we cannot change the way that we share that message with the world around us. Traditionally the Gospel was shared through open air services like the Billy Graham crusades. However, now we share it in our everyday lives through our social media accounts.

As a church we need to be willing to try new ways and new ideas to bring the message of God into this world. Maybe that means a new service, or a new time, or new day. Maybe it means we try something completely different in the hopes of reaching a group of people that either have not heard the Gospel or who have not heard the truth of the Gospel.

We need to be like Paul and be willing to shake up our own comfort zones in reaching people. We need to be willing to say it is ok if I sacrifice some of what makes me comfortable, to reach out to others in this world and bring them the message of the Gospel. We need to be willing to connect with the culture and community around us, without conforming to them, so that we can bring God into their lives.

We need to be like Paul and be willing to live our lives as Christians in an unchristian world so that through our words and actions others can discover the truth of who Jesus Christ is in our lives. This is how we become the Salt and Light of the Lord in this dark and broken world.

As Paul said.

1 Corinthians 9:23

²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Let us pray,

Neighborly Love, Service and Helpfulness

Almighty and eternal God,
we are poor sinners
and stand under your righteous judgment.
With all our hearts
we thank you for taking all our guilt from us
and laying it on your dear Son Christ Jesus.
Graciously sustain us in faith

and govern us by your Holy Spirit,
 that we may live according to your will,
 in neighborly love, service, and helpfulness,
 and not give way to wrath or revenge,
 that we may not incur your wrath
 but always find in you a gracious Father;
 through 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, Trinity 22

Hymn #358: “There is a Redeemer”

There is a Redeemer,
 Jesus God’s own Son,
 Precious Lamb of God,
 Messiah, Holy One.

Chorus

Thank You, O my Father
 For giving us Your Son,
 And leaving Your Spirit ‘til
 Your work on earth is done.

Jesus my Redeemer,
 Name above all names,
 Precious Lamb of God,
 Messiah, O for sinners slain. (Chorus)

When I stand in glory
 I will see His face,
 And there I’ll serve
 My King forever,
 In that holy place. (Chorus)

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Christ calls the bread his body
 and the cup his blood,
 or the new covenant in his blood.
 Christ has good reason for these words.
 He wants to teach us that

just as bread and wine nourish the temporal life,
 so too his crucified body and poured-out blood
 are the true food and drink of our souls for eternal life.
 But more important,
 he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge,
 that we, through the Holy Spirit's work,
 share in his true body and blood
 as surely as our mouths
 receive these holy signs in his remembrance,
 and that all of his suffering and obedience
 are as definitely ours as if we personally
 had suffered and made satisfaction for our sins.

Let us Pray,

All-powerful God, I am sinful. Nothing I can do can save me. I turn away from my sin, and I flee to you. I need you. I need the life-giving death and resurrection of Jesus. Send me your Spirit so that I can be made new. Thank you for offering me forgiveness. Thank you for taking the punishment I deserved. Thank you for loving me more than I could possibly imagine. Amen.

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you;
And also with you.

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

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

With joy we praise you, gracious God,
 for you created heaven and earth,
 made us in your image, and kept covenant with us—
 even when we fell into sin.
 We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord,
 who by his life, death, and resurrection
 opened to us the way of everlasting life.
 Therefore, we join our voices
 with all the saints and angels and the whole creation
 to proclaim the glory of your name.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name

**in earth and sky and sea.
 Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
 God in three persons, blessed Trinity**

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.

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

We celebrate this feast in obedience to Christ's example and mandate.

[as the minister breaks 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."

[as the minister lifts or pours 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."
Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord
until he comes.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled
The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ
died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Taking of the bread

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

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

Loving God,
you graciously feed us
with the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.
May we who have received this sacrament
be strengthened in your service;

we who have sung your praises
 tell of your glory and truth;
 we who have seen the greatness of your love
 see you face to face in your kingdom.
 For you have made us your own people
 by the death and resurrection of your Son, our Lord,
 and by the life-giving power of your Spirit. Amen.

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3). We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer:

E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. standrewspert offering@gmail.com If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message

Offertory Prayer **(Congregant Prepared)**

Closing Hymn #479: "The Church's One Foundation" (V 1,2,5)

The church's one foundation
 is Jesus Christ our Lord;
 we are his new creation
 by water and the word;
 from heaven he came and sought us
 that we might ever be
 his living servant people,
 by his own death set free.

Called forth from every nation,
 yet one o'er all the earth,
 our charter of salvation,
 one Lord, one faith, one birth,
 one holy name professing
 and at one table fed,

to one hope we are pressing,
by Christ's own Spirit led.

We now on earth have union
with God the ThreeinOne,
and share, through faith, communion
with those whose rest is won,
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
like them, the meek and lowly,
on high may dwell with thee.

Pastoral Prayer

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

Benediction

The God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do God's will,
working among us that which is pleasing in God's sight
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever! **Amen.**