

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Guest Worship Leader: Rev. Beryl Orok

Compassionate Living for Christ  
Proper 12  
Matthew 9:35-38, Matthew 20:29-34

### Welcome

### Announcements

### Call to Worship

Come, let us bow down in worship,  
**let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;**

for he is our God  
**and we are the people of his pasture,  
the flock under his care.**

### 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 Hymn: "Fruit of the Spirit"

### Call to Confession

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

**Prayer of Confession**

O Lord, great God,  
 all holy, Father most gracious,  
 filled with mercy and steadfast love,  
 we are embarrassed to come before you,  
 for we have preferred the ways of this world to your ways,  
 for we have rebelled against your wisdom  
 and we have gotten into trouble,  
 for we have rejected your fatherly guidance  
 and have gotten lost altogether.  
 To you belongs righteousness, O Lord,  
 and to us confusion of face.  
 O Lord, great God,  
 all holy, filled with awe,  
 Father, most gracious,  
 filled with mercy and steadfast love,  
 incline your ear to our troubles.  
 Hear us when we pour out our sorrows before you.  
 Forgive us,  
 not on the ground of our own righteousness,  
 but on the ground of your great mercy.  
 On the ground of your great mercy  
 in the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.  
 It is in his name that we pray,  
 for he is our Savior and the mediator of the covenant of grace. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Know that in Jesus,  
 God embraces you, forgives you,  
 and strengthens you to live a renewed life.

**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.

**Opening Hymn #461: "Be Thou My Vision"**

Be thou my vision, O lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art,

Thou my best thought in the day and the night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom; be thou my true word, I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
Thou my great Father, thine own may I be, thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight; be thou my ar and be thou my might;  
Thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower, raise thou me heaven-ward, O power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain earthly praise, thou my inheritance, through all my days;  
Thou and thou only, the first in my heart, high King of heaven, my treasure thou art!

High King of heaven, when battle is done, grant heaven's joy to me, O bright heaven's Sun;  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Psalm 119:129-136**

<sup>129</sup>Your testimonies are wonderful;  
therefore my soul keeps them.

<sup>130</sup>**The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it imparts understanding to the simple.**

<sup>131</sup>I open my mouth and pant,  
because I long for your commandments.

<sup>132</sup>**Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as is your way with those who love your name.**

<sup>133</sup>Keep steady my steps according to your promise,  
and let no iniquity get dominion over me.

<sup>134</sup>**Redeem me from man's oppression,  
that I may keep your precepts.**

<sup>135</sup>Make your face shine upon your servant,  
and teach me your statutes.

<sup>136</sup>**My eyes shed streams of tears,  
because people do not keep your law.**

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

## **Scripture**

### **Matthew 9:35-38**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

<sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

### **Matthew 20:29-34**

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. <sup>30</sup> Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

<sup>31</sup> The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

<sup>32</sup> Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

<sup>33</sup> “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

## **Sermon: Compassionate Living for Christ**

A story is told in the parable of Luke 10:29–37 and is summarized like this: A man going from Jerusalem to Jericho is attacked by robbers who strip him and beat him; leaving him by the roadside to suffer. A priest and a Levite come along, observe his plight; and pass by without stopping to help him. But a Samaritan does stop; and after tending to the man’s wounds; he then takes him to an inn, where he pays for his ongoing care. This parable is famously known for its message about loving our neighbor. It challenges us regarding our prejudices and our ideas concerning who our neighbor is! The two people from the local religious community you most expect to stop and help, for whatever reason; just walk on by.

As Christians we often talk about, hear sermons preached concerning, and do studies related to, sharing the Gospel of Christ; discipling new Christians and impacting our community for Christ.

But all that gleaned knowledge needs to go much deeper than just our intellect. It has to!

We must get serious about using the Biblical knowledge we have; becoming specific with our observations and our intentions, as we journey on the Spirit led path.

**John 13:34 Jesus admonishes us to love one another.**

**“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.”**

The parable of the Good Samaritan always speaks to me of a specific character trait displayed by the Samaritan, as he saw to the welfare of this wounded man. A character trait that evolves out of loving one another i.e. compassion. Compassion is a powerful force, when it is working in our lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Christ met broken, hurting, angry, vulnerable, people and he had compassion on them.

**Psalm 145:9 The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.**

The Gospels are full of accounts of Jesus showing compassion to people he encountered. Christ’s compassion led Him to show mercy and forgiveness. Loving one another often means, forgiving one another and that brings our Christian experience to a whole other level.

To really see a person; take time to listen to them, to hear their pain and their anger; to realize what fuels it, and show them love, is not always easy for sure.

I have heard many stories of actions that led to the pain, even death, of others, and it is only through the grace of God, that I can see with His eyes that person He still loves, and is willing to forgive if they seek His forgiveness.

We are called to share the benefits we are blessed with; food, money, and our time, with those in need; to seek out the lonely and lost, bringing to them a healing presence of love and acceptance; to care, even when we cannot cure! We are called to encourage the sad and down-trodden. James, the brother of Jesus, wrote in **James 1:27**

**“Look after the orphans and widows in their distress”.**

Look after them. What does that mean? It means recognizing their personhood and their need; to be accountable for their welfare, as much as within our ability to do so. It may mean including them in your life activities on some level.

It can often be easier to just give a donation. I see so many “Go Fund me pages,” created to help out those who have lost their home to fire etc. And that is all good.

But let's think about this as a Christian. How much more effective would our witness be; if we actually made the effort to reach out personally to the people; to give, yes; but to express caring, and compassion, and inquire how we can help. Last time I was here, I spoke about our calling, through the story of Ezekiel. This call to compassion is very much a part of each of our individual and collective callings, as the body of Christ.

The call to compassion runs throughout the Bible.

**Deuteronomy 15:11** 'for there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore, I command you, 'you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

**Leviticus 19: 9-10** when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.

I always think of such Scriptures when I see produce rotting on the vines in the field. I was recently embarrassed to have to admit to a young man from Uganda who asked me; "Is it true that Canadians dump milk"? That yes: to our shame, we do!

I understand milk marketing boards, etc; but to a person coming from so little, and rarely getting the treat of a glass of milk, it was just incomprehensible.

The verses from the Old Testament are directly related to Jesus's words in the New Testament, found in:

**Matthew 25:40** The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

This is not just about giving to obey the letter of the law; but rather, giving with a Spirit-led heart of compassion for others. It is not forgiving out of compulsion; but rather, forgiving out of compassion. Compulsion meaning: obligation.

The greatest act of compassion, combined with forgiveness, is found in the words of Jesus as he hung dying on the cross. After all he went through; the beatings, the mockery, the betrayals, He said "Father forgive them for they know not what they do".

Do we sometimes find it hard to forgive, because we can't imagine someone who has hurt us; not knowing what they are doing? And besides that; they may not express regret or sorrow for their actions.

I risk to say that even brutality is an act, wherein the person harming the other, knows not what they do. Not because they don't know it's wrong, or that they are harming someone else; but because they are so blinded by sin, hate or rage, that they fail to

recognize the person they are harming is created in the image of God; and is so loved by God! This identity is a powerful identity to be unaware of, or to ignore. The people who crucified Christ did just that.

Do we sometimes forget the identity of people as one who is created in the image of God? Do we sometimes forget that we are created in the image of God; and make choices that hurt ourselves and others?

God calls us not to deny, or excuse the harm done in any way. People have to be held accountable for their actions that harm others. Abuse is never acceptable on any level. To have compassion for someone so broken, damaged, filled with sin, that they harm others is so hard! God will help us!

Onesimus was a servant/slave of Philemon, who was a wealthy Christian in Colossae. He had robbed Philemon and fled to Rome; where he met Paul and heard the Gospel message. His life was changed; but he needed to make things right.

Paul sends him back to Philemon with a message.

#### **Philemon 1:8-12**

**Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. NIV**

Paul was requesting compassion and forgiveness for Onesimus.

**Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

**Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.**

Earlier this year I experienced a very distressing episode in a church Bible study meeting. A gentleman was questioning the validity of the doctrine of the Trinity, and daring others to explain/ prove to him how God could be three persons in one.

Now, these are the types of individuals that I personally have learned to not take the bait from. For the most part they are already convinced of what they believe and only want to argue. One woman attempted to give the illustration of the egg; the yolk, the white and the shell. The three in one; making a whole egg. Granted, it was simplistic illustration, but it made sense to her.

The gentleman became quite belligerent, and told her, that her illustration was just something someone would say, when they have nothing to say! She was obviously hurt, and I was annoyed!

It was just so unkind! So not necessary: to put another down!

Certainly, no Fruits of the Spirit on display there.

**John Maxwell says:” People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”**

His comments made me think of this verse of Scripture:

### **1 Corinthians 13: 1**

**If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**

When we live with hearts of compassion, it is a quality that attracts others to us. If someone is ever going to listen to us; they have to experience us as genuinely caring about them. Or they need to observe us caring for others with kindness and respect. People watch our lives as Christians and they scrutinize our walk. Do we practice what we preach?

We can’t possibly fulfill this well-known command in Ephesians, 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you, without God’s love within us as our guide to love others. How do we measure the depth of our love for others, which enables us to show compassion? I believe it starts by realizing the depth of God’s love for us.

**One of my favorite hymns is ‘How Deep the Father’s Love for Us’:**

**How deep the Father's love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure!  
That He should give His only Son,  
To make a wretch His treasure.  
How great the pain of searing loss!  
The Father turns His face away;  
As wounds which marred the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory.**



Behold the man upon a cross:  
 My sin upon His shoulders;  
 Ashamed I hear my mocking voice  
 Call out among the scoffers.  
 It was my sin that held Him there  
 Until it was accomplished;  
 His dying breath has brought me life:  
 I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything:  
 No gifts, no power, no wisdom;  
 But I will boast in Jesus Christ:  
 His death and resurrection.  
 Why should I gain from His reward?  
 I cannot give an answer;  
 But this I know with all my heart:  
 His wounds have paid my ransom.

These words impact my spirit so much. To think that Jesus gave up His heavenly position, His glory, and eventually, His earthly life to serve and save us!

That's a depth of love we struggle to understand, and yet Jesus says, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Christ forgave me and continues to forgive me. He holds out his nail scarred hand to me every day, and I am called to hold out my hand to others.

Here's a thought I share with you in all earnestness today:

**Bill Hybels wrote, "When action-orientated compassion is absent, it's a tell-tale sign that something is spiritually amiss."**

People don't need so much our actions, or our speeches; but our real, authentic caring; that clear, and consistent demonstration of Christ-like love as a powerful magnet to drawing them towards Christ.

It is important not to confuse sympathy with compassion.

Simply put:

**Sympathy looks in and says, "I'm sorry"**  
**Compassion goes in and says, "I'm here with you."**

**Sympathy looks on and says, "I'd like to help."**

**Compassion says, "I'm here to help."**

**Sympathy says, "I wish I could carry your burden."**

**Compassion says, "Cast your burden on me."**

**Sympathy often irritates with many words.**

**Compassion helps and hears in quietness and understanding.**

**Author unknown**

Are there people you know who are hurting, disabled, foreign to our community or our culture, bereaved, lonely or abandoned? In other words; left by the roadside.

I remember one time we were driving down the street of Napanee. There was a rather disheveled woman lying on the sidewalk near the crosswalk of the main intersection. People were glancing; but nobody stopped. Perhaps she was known to them and they didn't want to get involved. I don't know. But I was concerned, so we stopped. Our friend, who was a long-time resident of Napanee was with us. She got out of the car with me. She recognized the woman and knew where she lived; just across the intersection in an apartment of the building on the corner. You didn't have to get too close to realize she was drunk! She stirred as we came along, and I asked her if we could help. She was trying to stand up; so, one of us on each side escorted her across the street; more like carried her to her door. She started to fumble in her pockets, and finally produced keys; which she couldn't get into the lock. I helped her. Then, all of a sudden, she became angry; and started accusing us of wanting to steal her money. We just smiled, backed away, and said we were glad she was home safe. She staggered into her home and shut the door.

We laughed about her accusations; but, at the same time, we knew that as Christians we did the right thing; even if our intentions were misinterpreted. We were not about to leave her lying in such an undignified display on the sidewalk, or have her attempt to cross a busy intersection, and possibly get hit with a car.

Our intentions may often be misunderstood. That's ok. Jesus was the most misunderstood person of all time, and we are his disciples.

**Sister Ilia Delio Franciscan nun said this; " We live in such a private world, with private dreams and concerns. It is no wonder we fear the immigrant and stranger. We hardly know our neighbor's struggles."**

This is sad; but true.

We need to ask ourselves this important question:

What would people who see us in community, our neighbors, or those who might visit our church say about us?

I would hope their comments would be something like:

Those people are really living for Jesus.

They're not perfect, but they love one another.

They pray for the sick, they visit the lost and the lonely; they include the widows and orphans around the table for Sunday fellowship together. Everyone is welcomed. They really show the love of Christ, by who they are and what they do! They are practicing what they preach.

Isn't that a wonderful testimony to have in the community.

It is said, "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

What better way to end a sermon than with the Holy Word of God. This Scripture sums up all I have been trying to say today.

**Romans 12:9-11 'Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'**

Let's Pray

God, you give us all we need, and love us in spite of ourselves.

If we are honest; oftentimes, compassion does not come easily to us.

We see others who struggle, who go without; those who have many needs, and it all just feels like too much and seems there is nothing we can do.

Help us to realize that compassion can be enough.

We pray for ourselves first God; that you would soften our hearts and still our fears and insecurities.

Lead us, teach us, to be compassionate people.

When we need encouragement to step out in faith, help us to remember those who have been changed thru simple acts of caring.

Help us to remember when an act of caring and compassion helped us through a rough time. Challenge us in all our ways to be like Jesus.

In His Holy name we pray. **Amen.**

**Hymn: "How Deep the Father's Love for Us"**

How deep the Father's love for us,  
 How vast beyond all measure,  
 That He should give His only Son  
 To make a wretch His treasure.  
 How great the pain of searing loss –  
 The Father turns His face away,  
 As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
 Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,  
 My sin upon His shoulders;  
 Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
 Call out among the scoffers.  
 It was my sin that held Him there  
 Until it was accomplished;  
 His dying breath has brought me life –  
 I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything,  
 No gifts, no power, no wisdom;  
 But I will boast in Jesus Christ,  
 His death and resurrection.  
 Why should I gain from His reward?  
 I cannot give an answer;  
 But this I know with all my heart –  
 His wounds have paid my ransom.

**Invitation to Offering**

**Offertory Prayer**

**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Closing Hymn #352: “And Can It Be That I Should Gain”**

And can it be that I should gain  
 God's riches through the Saviour's blood?  
 Died he for me, who caused his pain?  
 For me, who him to death pursued?  
 Amazing love! how can it be  
 that thou, my God, should'st die for me?  
 Amazing love! how can it be  
 that thou, my God, should'st die for me?

'Tis mystery all! the immortal dies:  
 who can explore his strange design?  
 In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
 to sound the depths of love divine.  
 'Tis mercy all! let earth adore;  
 let angel minds inquire no more.  
 'Tis mercy all! let earth adore;  
 let angel minds inquire no more.

He left his Father's throne above,  
 so free, so infinite his grace,  
 emptied himself of all but love,  
 and bled for Adam's helpless race.  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
 for, O my God, it found out me.  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
 for, O my God, it found out me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
 fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
 thine eye diffused a quickening ray;  
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
 my chains fell off; my heart was free.  
 I rose, went forth and followed thee.  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free.  
 I rose, went forth and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;

Jesus, and all in him, is mine;  
 alive in him, my living head,  
 and clothed in righteousness divine,  
 bold I approach the eternal throne,  
 and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.  
 Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
 and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

### Pastoral Prayer

Loving and eternal God may we never take for granted the privilege of gathering together in Your house, and the freedom we have to worship and praise You. We humbly come to you with our joys and our gratitude for your many blessings. Empower us to do good work in the world; trusting that Your very presence strengthens our human inabilities and dissolves our limitations. Loving God, we ask Your blessing upon us, Your church, that we would grow and flourish in Your love and grace, for the purpose to which You have called us individually and corporately. May this Church be a strong and vital church in this community; showing thru the ministries, the programs, and our lives that You are real, and that through Christ, and Christ alone, we are saved.

We pray for all who are carrying deep hurts and pain in the secret places of their heart. We pray for those who are grieving; those who are ill; specifically, we pray for our friend Rick Richardson, that you would be very near to him and may peace and assurance of your love and mercy guide him on his way. We pray for all who are facing uncertain futures; may they feel your compassionate love and courage for the days ahead. In times of trouble; you never fail us and we thank you for that.

We pray for peace and stability for those countries of the world where war ravages and so often the innocent suffer.

Our governments at all levels need Your Holy Spirit to guide in their decision making. May the personal agendas of the elected officials be set aside for the common good of the people they have been elected to serve.

We give thanks for all in this body of believers who share their gifts and labor faithfully each week to ensure that we have this place and this opportunity to be together to worship you.

Fill us to overflowing with Your love and compassion that in all our ways we might bring glory to your holy name. **Amen.**

**Benediction**

As you go out from this place may God give you have eyes to see and ears to hear of the needs of those around you.

May Christ's compassion shine through in all you do in his name.

May the Holy Spirt be your guide and faithful companion along the way.

Now go in peace to love and serve the Lord and each other. **Amen.**