

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, November 17th, 2024
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Living Faithfully
Proper 28
Hebrews 10:23-39

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Lift up your heads, you gates;
 be lifted up, you ancient doors,
 that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The LORD strong and mighty,
 the LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, you gates;

lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is he, this King of glory?

The LORD Almighty— he is the King of glory.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

God of creation and compassion,
 You hear the cries of your people.

You know our fear and despair.

In your great love, you assure us that you walk with us in Christ Jesus.

In this time of worship,

we long to see your new heaven and new earth break through,
 making your justice known and life fruitful for all your children.

We praise you for the hope you offer us in Christ Jesus.

We trust that you are at work in your church and in creation
 so, all that is broken will be made new.

Through our prayers and our praise,

strengthen our trust in your promised future, O God,

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life.

In Jesus's wonderful and all-powerful name, we pray.

Amen

Children's Hymn: "Give Me Oli In My Lamp"

Call to Confession

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

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God,
you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you.
We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy.
We have not loved you with a pure heart,
nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves.
We have not done justice, loved kindness,
or walked humbly with you, our God.
Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness.
In your great compassion,
cleanse us from our sin.
Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Do not cast us from your presence,
or take your Holy Spirit from us.
Restore to us the joy of your salvation
and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news!
Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit
Know that in Jesus,
God embraces you, forgives you,
and strengthens you to live a renewed life.
Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer

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

Forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn #461: “Be Thou My Vision” (V 1,3,5)

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 breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my arand and be thou my might;
thou my soul’s shelter and thou my high tower,
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

High King of heaven, when the 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 119:73-80

⁷³ Your hands have made and fashioned me;
give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.

⁷⁴ **Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice,
because I have hoped in your word.**

⁷⁵ I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous,
and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

⁷⁶ **Let your steadfast love comfort me
according to your promise to your servant.**

⁷⁷ Let your mercy come to me, that I may live;
for your law is my delight.

⁷⁸ **Let the insolent be put to shame,
because they have wronged me with falsehood;
as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.**

⁷⁹ Let those who fear you turn to me,
that they may know your testimonies.

⁸⁰ **May my heart be blameless in your statutes,
that I may not be put to shame!**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “There’ll Be Joy”

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

Hebrews 10: 23-39

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For,

"Yet a little while,
 and the coming one will come and will not delay;
³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith,
 and if he shrinks back,
 my soul has no pleasure in him."

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Sermon

The word 'Apostasy' is a word you may or may not be familiar with, however, in many churches the idea that it represents is not a popular topic of conversation. Apostasy as defined in English means to 'abandon your faith'. It talks about people who claim to be followers of a religion and then for whatever reason, claim to no longer be a follower of that religion. You all probably

know someone who has told you at least once, 'I used to be a Christian.' That is the worldly definition of Apostate, people who have turned away from God.

However, the word has a much different meaning when we look at its Greek roots. Apostasy as it is defined Biblically, does not mean to turn your back on God, it means the fearful denial or hiding of your faith once you truly believe. It is a subtle difference but an important one. Important enough that it is talked about in the book of Hebrews in the section of Scripture we are looking at today.

Apostasy is what you do when you compromise with the culture because you are fearful of standing in the Scripture. Apostasy is what we see occurring in the Scripture when Peter denies Jesus after Jesus's arrest. Peter denies being with Jesus three times, why? He denies him because he is afraid of the consequences of being associated to Jesus.

Do you remember the word of Jesus Christ in the book of Luke?

Luke 9:23-27

²³ And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷ But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

He is speaking about what it means to be a true believer, and what it means to be an apostate believer, and then finally what it means to be an unbeliever. The true believer stands beside Jesus in every aspect of their life, the apostate picks and chooses their allegiance, sometimes to God and sometimes to the world, and the unbeliever denies Christ and in the end receives eternal death.

So, we need to walk through the Scripture today, knowing that apostasy is just as common within the church, as it was common within the followers of Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews was written to help guide us in our faith and help us better understand the call to true faith.

If apostasy is simply the fearful hiding of the fact that we are followers of Jesus Christ, as opposed to the outright falling away from the faith, that makes it very real in all of our lives and makes this section of Hebrews one that we should pay particular attention to in our walk with God. Apostasy can be overcome, or it can be fatal, and this is one of the reasons why fellowship within a Bible believing church is so important in this world.

The first few verses in today's Scripture tell us what our faith should be like.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

If we have a strong faith we trust in Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives. All of our hope comes from him, and we focus our life around serving him in this world. We work together to promote his Word in this world, we work together to promote faithfulness in one another. We promote the love and care of people in our community. Verse 24 actually tells us we need to sometime poke and prod our fellow believers to take part in the good work that we are doing.

Verse 25 is perhaps the most controversial in the modern church. It says that you need to physically come to a church if you are capable, which means self-church or you-tube church, or nature walk church is not sufficient for a true believer. The modern church meets once a week, a minor event in a busy week, we need to remember that the churches described in the book of Acts met daily. So, making an effort to get together once a week with fellow faithful believers should be a priority in our lives, and if possible, we should be looking for ways to be involved in our faith community more than once a week, through Bible studies, fellowship events and in the ways that we serve one another and serve our community.

Now that we understand what the faithful are, lets look at what Apostasy looks like in the church.

Hebrews 10:26-28

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Apostasy is the deliberate ongoing of sin in our lives. To understand this, we need to start by acknowledging that it is voluntary, it is something that we knowingly choose to do in our lives. Secondly what it is talking about is that this sin is repetitive and unrepentant.

This is not talking about a one-time mistake, or a constant struggle against a sin in our lives. This is talking about the person who knows that something is sinful, and they continue to choose to miss the mark according to God's Word in their lives. The word sin means missing the mark, it was used in archery and it ultimately meant to be in a competition and not receive a prize.

James described sin as giving in to ones own selfish and self -focused wisdom instead of the wisdom of God. So, in simplest of terms it means that after you know the truth of God's Word, sin is to voluntarily continue to go against what God says is the truth in his Scriptures. That would mean according to the Scripture we read earlier that no attending a physical church regularly could constitute sin, because that Scripture told us to do so.

And if, for whatever reason, we continue to choose sin, the text today says that there is no longer a sacrifice for that sin. That sounds bad, really bad. The Scripture says that if you know God's Word says something and you choose to continually disregard it, that is sin, and there will be judgment upon you because you are essentially saying that you do not care about the sacrifice that Jesus made of his blood upon the cross for your Salvation.

This verse is one of the reasons why so many people believe that you can lose your salvation.

However, this idea of apostasy is brought up earlier in Chapter 6 where we are told to seek out the lost brothers and sisters and bring them back to faith, it says nothing of them losing their salvation.

Hebrews 6:4-6

⁴ For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt

However, the clearest explanation of what happens to a true believer who lives in Apostasy comes in the book of first Corinthians

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

If you are a faithful Christian, you are building your life on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ in every aspect of your life. However, if you choose to compromise with the world, if you choose to fearfully hide your faith and live in apostasy, you will be saved, as if through fire. I do not know about you, but that does not sound so good to me.

So, what is the apostasy that we are to avoid in this world.

Hebrews 10: 29-31

²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by

which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."

³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Trampling underfoot the Son of God. The intentional disregarding of God's Word. The intentional discrediting or watering down of what Scripture says. The intentional avoidance or skipping of the parts of Scripture we do not like or disagree with, this is trampling the Son of God. When we do this, we are essentially saying we do not revere and respect his authority in our lives, we do not love him like we are called to love him, we do not really want to obey his ways because they interfere with our enjoyment of life. To which God responds, you will be judged.

The same can be said of those who treats the sacrifice that Christ made upon the cross of his blood for our sins as no big deal. This would include all of those churches and people who teach that we are sanctified in different ways or that our Salvation comes from anything but the blood of Christ. Jesus Christ alone is the way to Salvation, his blood alone paid the price for our sins, there is no other way and no other route into the kingdom of heaven except in the truth of God's Word. When we do not stand firm in our knowledge and belief of our Salvation through Christ we are treating his sacrifice with contempt, telling God it did not really matter. We may not say that, but we show it in the way we live, when we continue to knowingly sin for ourselves and our pleasure we are telling Jesus, your suffering and death is less important than my life and pleasure.

Finally, we have those that outrage the Spirit of Grace. This is speaking of those who do things out of spite, those who intentionally go against the Word of God, just to go against the Word of God. We see this often in apostasy, people who intentionally chose to align with anything that goes against the Scripture as a symbol of their defiance and turning away from faith. Like the child who is told 'do not eat that', and then they immediately shove the whole thing in their mouth and swallow it down while grinning devilishly at the person who told them 'do not eat that'.

Whether you are saved or not, on the Day of Judgement, would you like to be standing before Jesus Christ when he asks you, 'Why you have trampled, profaned and outraged me?'

If you do not want to be facing that question on the Day of Judgement the book of Hebrews has some advice for you.

Hebrews 10:32-39

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For

you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For,

**“Yet a little while,
and the coming one will come and will not delay;
³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith,
and if he shrinks back,
my soul has no pleasure in him.”**

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Firstly, recall the former days when you were enlightened.’ Do you remember how you felt when you first came to the realization of who Jesus Christ was and the sacrifice that he had made for you? Do you remember how you felt when it finally hit you, when you finally accepted the truth of God’s Word in your life and decided to commit yourself to the faith? Did you go out and party? Did you go get high or get drunk? NO! instead you wanted to change your life, you wanted to please God, because in that moment you felt so thankful for the grace and mercy that he had given to you.

Next, we are told to have compassion, even on the people who harm us and hurt us. Do you remember the suffering that was inflicted upon our Lord before he was hung upon the cross to die? Do you remember the compassion he had for those people who had done such horrible things to him, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ So as his followers should we not be able to show compassion and love for people who might insult us, ridicule us, hurt us, harm us or even persecute us, all in less severe ways than Jesus was treated.

Thirdly, we are told to keep our confidence. The word confidence is a bit of an incorrect translation. The word we see translated as confidence actually means something closer to boldness, outspokenness and frankness in speaking about the truth of God’s Word. No one here would have an issue boldly telling others that the sky is blue, even if the other person swore that the sky is green. That is the idea that is trying to be taught here, one of the ways that we keep apostasy from our lives and help push it out from the lives of others, is by boldly proclaiming the truth of the Scriptures even when the world swears that something else is true.

Fourthly, endure, persevere, have patience as James would say. The Greek word here literally means to stand your ground on a battlefield. Stand your ground, stand firm in God’s Word, live in faith even when it is difficult, remember the reward in eternity is so much more valuable than momentary pleasures here on earth.

And Finally, live by faith.

As faithful followers of Jesus Christ we are called to live by reliance on Christ. We need to ask ourselves whether we are living trusting and relying on the Lord or is our life determined by what we feel we are capable of doing without interfering with our enjoyment or lifestyle.

This means are we doing what God has called for us to do in our lives? Are we sharing our faith with people who we think might not be receptive to it, trusting that once we share it the Holy Spirit will do its work. Or are we giving a little bit more away than we think we can spare, are we sacrificing a little bit of our personal enjoyment to serve his kingdom, trusting that He will provide all we need.

What this bit of Scripture means is that if it is something that you can comfortably do on your own, then you are not really doing it out for faith, are you? If you always do just what you think you can do, your faith is in yourself and not Jesus Christ.

And that is the core of apostasy, when you stop relying on him, when you stop depending on Him, when you stop trusting in him and start depending on yourself or this world, you are giving up on your faith. You still might believe in what he did for you, Died upon the cross for your salvation, his blood paying the price of your sin. So yes, you are saved, you have salvation, but you are no longer living out your faith, and you will be saved as through fire. If you don't believe then you do not even have salvation.

The next chapter in Hebrews deals with the so-called heroes of the faith. People who lived out their faith through their obedience and perseverance to the Lord and his Scriptures and promises.

Hebrews 11:13-16

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Did you notice they died in faith, not having received the things promised. They lived in this world faithful to the Lord, not always getting everything they wanted, often living lives of persecution and suffering. It would have been so much easier for them to turn away from God and back to the ways of the world. But they looked to eternity and focused on that, they did not let themselves be distracted by the ways of the world, they refuse to compromise with the ways of the world, and because of that God is not ashamed of them.

Sin is missing the mark; it is living according to the ways and wisdom of the world. It is living focused on self, it is not just the ten commandments, it is the entire teachings of the Scripture.

John summed this up nicely in first John

1 John 3:4-10

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

And all throughout his letters you see this repeated, Choose God or choose the world, you cannot have one foot in each camp.

Do you recall how James said it?

James 4:4

⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

We have to choose who we love more and who we fear more. Do we love and fear the world or do we love and fear God? If we love and fear the world we will live according to the ways of the world. And if we love and fear God, we will fearlessly proclaim the truth of God's Word to the world.

Our love of God is tested every time we are given the opportunity to proclaim our faith. And every time that the fear of the world and the repercussion of our faith causes us to be silent and hide our faith, we are living in apostasy. Every time that we refuse to talk to people about God because we might experience some form of discomfort or persecution we are living in apostasy. Because when we hide our faith, it shows we are more attached to the world than we are to God, and that is sin.

Once we have the knowledge of the truth and we continue to sin by choice we can live in an expectation of judgment that is what the book of Hebrews teaches us. So, if we choose not to share our faith in this world with the people we know and do not know, are we sinning? Considering that we all are to participate in the Great Commission, sharing our faith and proclaiming the truth to the four corners of the world, considering that we are commanded to be witnesses, when we do not do so, yes, we are sinning.

Now do you see how important that verse from James actually is? When you love and fear the world, when you choose to obey the world, you are saying that the world is more important

than God. You are saying my comfort, and my pleasure is more important than God. I would rather offend God, than offend the world.

It is not until you learn to love and fear God more than the world that you are living faithfully.

The book of Hebrews told us to; remember our conversion, be compassionate, be confident, endure and live by faith. That means we need to stand firm in our faith at all times and in all places even in the face of personal loss. It means we boldly declare the truth of God's word in our lives.

As Christians in the modern world, we often misunderstand what this means.

Ask yourself, is it really faith to come to church on Sunday, do you face persecution or suffering by coming to church?

Are you allowed to participate in the economy, are there any jobs you cannot hold because of your faith, any shops that will not do business with you because of your faith?

Is it illegal to own a Bible? Or have one out in public? Sure, it might take a bit of courage to read your Bible in the coffee shop downtown, but it is unlikely that you will be kicked out for it.

It isn't until you start to publicly proclaim your faith, you start to speak and act like a Christian in every aspect of your life that you begin to feel the effects of your faith upon yourself and the people around you. It isn't until you start to stand up for the truth of God's Word in places where people shun God or turn away from God that you begin to experience ridicule and persecution. It isn't until you insist that Jesus Christ is the one and only way into heaven that the world begins to react.

Look at what happened just a few years ago when the CEO of Chick-fil-a said that they support the Biblical definition of marriage and that he doesn't think the world has the right to redefine what a marriage blessed by God means. This was taken by a large part of society to be an anti-gay attack, there was an uproar and a call to boycott the company.

Is that an anti-gay statement or is it a statement protecting the truth of God's Word? Notice he specifically stated a Godly marriage, the world can still have its civil unions and worldly marriages. He was stating what a marriage in the eyes of the Lord is, and for that he and his company were attacked. He knew that this statement could cost the company millions of dollars.

However, he stood firm in his statement, he refused to retract it, or turn away from it, or cater to the people calling for change or a boycott. He boldly proclaimed the truth of God's Word and stuck by it, rather than fall into apostasy. And so, you are aware, even now years later, every time a new Chick-fil-a opens, like one did in Kanata a few months ago, there is a call to shut them down through a boycott or demonstrations by those who oppose God's Word.

So, ask yourselves, if you were ever in a position where you had to declare your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and by doing so you would suffer a great cost or suffering, would you do so?

Jesus told us in the Great Commission that we are to take his message to the world

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

He told us that we are to seek out opportunities to share our faith with others. We have to be willing to stand firm in our faith regardless of where we are and who we are with. We have to choose who do we love and fear more, the world or God?

Anyone can claim to be a Christian in the comfort of their home, or the comfort of a church, even in the company of other Christians. True believers hold true to their faith in places of opposition and danger. They go beyond just telling others that they are Christian and leaving it there, they proclaim the truth of his word in their lives, testifying about how His Word has changed their lives even in the face of judgement, ridicule and persecution.

They understand the meaning of that last verse:

Hebrews 10:39

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Which if you read it as a direct translation of the Greek has more meaning and impact:

Hebrews 10:39

But we are not of those who cower or hide their faith out of sight leading us to eternal destruction, but those of bold conviction who acquire and keep our breath and everlasting spiritual life in Christ.

The faithful understand what it means to be the Salt and Light of God's Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

For Mercy and Grace

O God, our true Life,
in whom and by whom all things live,
you command us to seek you,
and you are ready to be found.

You command us to knock,
 and open when we do so.
 To know you is life,
 to serve you is freedom,
 to enjoy you is a kingdom,
 to praise you is the joy and happiness of the soul.
 I praise, bless, and adore you,
 I worship you, I glorify you, I give thanks to you for your great glory.
 I humbly ask you to remain with me,
 to reign in me,
 to make my heart your holy temple,
 a fit habitation for your Divine majesty.
 Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible,
 preserve the work of your own hands,
 your people who trust in your mercy alone for safety and protection.
 Guard me with the power of your grace,
 here and in all places,
 now and at all times, forevermore. **Amen.**

Source: Augustine of Hippo

Hymn #496: "Thy Word Is A Lamp Into My Feet"

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
 and a light unto my path.

When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,
 still you're there right beside me,
 and nothing will I fear as long as you are near.
 Please be near me to the end.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
 and a light unto my path.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
 and a light unto my path.

I will not forget your love for me,
 and yet my heart forever is wandering.
 Jesus, be my guide and hold me to your side,
 and I will love you to the end.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
 and a light unto my path.

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Offertory Prayer **(Congregant Prepared)**

Closing Hymn #672: "Jesus Calls Us, O'er The Tumult" (V 1,4,5)

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea;
day by day his voice still calls us
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
Jesus calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us: by your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
give our hearts in glad obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Pastoral Prayer

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life,
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips,
but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**

Benediction

May God himself,
the God who makes everything holy and whole,
make you holy and whole,
put you together—spirit, soul, and body—
and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. **Amen**