

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Christianity and the World**  
**Proper 24**  
**John 15:12-16:4**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

God promises us justice,  
**and teaches us persistence.**

God promises us compassion,  
**and teaches us not to lose heart.**

God promises to be with us  
**and teaches us to tend to each other.**

So let us worship our God of comfort and challenge,  
**We will offer prayers and praise to our God of hope and healing.**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,  
you breathe life into all things and nourish your whole creation.  
You are a rock and refuge for your people,  
for you are trustworthy in all things.  
Your desire for peace with justice can never be defeated.  
You alone can bring life out of death,  
and restore wholeness to broken lives,  
so we praise you and rejoice in the hope you offer.  
For your love is the power at work in every situation,  
seeking goodness and revealing truth,  
a love that will never let us go.  
In our time of worship, we offer you our love and loyalty  
through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Children's Video: "Everlasting God"**

**Call to Confession**

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

**Prayer of Confession**

**God of our hopes and our hearts,  
You provide the gift of faith but we lose heart quickly.  
Troubles weaken our trust and  
disappointments eat away at our commitment.  
Forgive us and create in us clean hearts and in  
your love, give us peace and perseverance.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Remember the promise St Paul declares:  
Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship? Not distress? Not Peril or sword?  
No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the God who loves us.  
Neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.  
Let us rejoice that, no matter what is happening around us, no matter what we have done, God's deep love will never let us go.

**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: "O, Church Arise"**

O, church arise and put your armor on  
Hear the call of Christ our captain  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
In the strength that God has given.

Come, see the cross where love and mercy meet,  
 As the Son of God is stricken  
 Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,  
 For the Conqueror has risen.

So Spirit, come, put strength in ev'ry stride,  
 Give grace for ev'ry hurdle,  
 That we may run with faith to win the prize  
 Of a servant good and faithful.

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Psalm 119:41-48**

<sup>41</sup> Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord,  
 your salvation according to your promise;

<sup>42</sup> **then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me,  
 for I trust in your word.**

<sup>43</sup> And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,  
 for my hope is in your rules.

<sup>44</sup> **I will keep your law continually,  
 forever and ever,**

<sup>45</sup> and I shall walk in a wide place,  
 for I have sought your precepts.

<sup>46</sup> **I will also speak of your testimonies before kings  
 and shall not be put to shame,**

<sup>47</sup> for I find my delight in your commandments,  
 which I love.

<sup>48</sup> **I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love,  
 and I will meditate on your statutes.**

**Anthem (Music Ministry): “The Untroubled Heart”**

**Prayer for Illumination**

## Scripture

### John 15:12-16:4

<sup>12</sup> “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

<sup>18</sup> “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. <sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

<sup>26</sup> “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

<sup>16</sup> “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. <sup>2</sup> They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup> And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup> But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

## Sermon

Jesus in that upstairs in a room with his eleven remaining disciples, men who loved him and whom he loved. They have shared the Passover meal together and now Jesus is preparing his disciples for what is to come.

Jesus knows that this is their last bit of time together before he will be arrested, taken before various authorities, condemned by the crowds, tortured, crucified and buried. So, in his

conversation with his disciples, he is telling them the important things that they need to know, and because of the importance you will notice that there is a lot of overlapping and repetition.

So, if Jesus felt that this was important enough to repeat to His disciples, it should be important to us as well.

He has taught them of their need to humbly serve one another, to cleanse one another's feet, and to help one another wash the sins of this world off their feet. He has called for them to love one another with the same love that he has for each of them, and he has told them that they need to learn to place all their faith and trust in God.

Then Jesus went on and explained how to do this, by loving him and keeping his commandments.

He then launched into the example of the vines and the branches, explaining how Christians need to be directly connected to Him, living in a direct and personal relationship with God so that He can do his work in them and through them in this world.

Essentially Jesus was saying the most important relationship you have in this world is with God, and your life had better be rooted in the knowledge of who God is, and what he asks of you.

He then goes on to explain what kind of relations He expects the disciples to have with one another.

**John 15:12-15**

**<sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.**

Jesus commands his disciples once again, to love one another as he had loved them.

Remember that these men were all from different backgrounds, they had different professions, different upbringings, different views on a wide variety of subjects based upon their life experiences. What was the glue that held them together, their love and obedience they had for their Master, Jesus.

Jesus was the glue that held them together, and he knew that they would fall apart because of their differences, so he insisted that they love one another in the same way that he loved them.

That is the extent of his instruction to his disciples, and that is his instruction to each of us.

Love one another as Jesus loves each of us.

We all believe that we are doing well, we are pretty good at loving the world, and loving others, after all looking at the world around us and the hate that is prevalent, we are great at loving. However, the measuring stick of our love is not the world around us, it is the love of Jesus Christ, and when we hold even our most loving day up against the expectation of loving our fellow Christians the same way Christ loves us, we often find we fail miserably.

We cannot love others the way that Jesus loves us on our own, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to do that, we need to invite Jesus into our hearts and ask for the strength, perseverance and ability to love as He loved.

We need to be fed by the vine, filled with the love of Jesus, so that we can share that love with the world.

Jesus must have made quite an impact when he taught this. There are writings of the early church that teach us that John the author of this Gospel even in his old age was still teaching the Word of God. He was still teaching the Word of God even when he was unable to walk, people use to carry him into the church so that he could speak.

And even when he was only able to teach for a few minutes, he always taught, 'Love one another' Over and over he taught this, God commanded the disciples to love one another and John repeated that command to everyone who would listen.

We are called to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, and that is hard. We all have moments when we do not love our brothers and sisters the way we should, we may even have times where we struggle to like them.

We might feel like we cannot love them, and when we feel like that we are called to go back to the vine and ask for the ability to love them. When you find yourself lacking the love of Jesus for a brother or sister, get on your knees and pray for God to give you the ability to love the way he loves, go to the vine and let the Holy Spirit do its work in you.

When we have the love of God first in our loves and the love of our brothers and sisters in our lives, everything else just seems to fall into place.

Jesus then tells them, '**Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.**' Jesus is going to be an example for them; he is going to die so that they can live. He is going to die for his friends.

Think about that, every writer in the New Testament, every great Christian theologian, every honest Christian worker in this world often describes themselves as a servant of Jesus Christ. Yet, Jesus calls them friends.

This was important, in Jesus's day there were lots of servants. Servants did the majority of work in the house and in businesses. They were the workers, the busy bodies that did the things others did not want to do, or things that they felt were beneath them.

A servant was a tool to be used and was not thought of as an equal to the master. They were tools, not co-workers, not partners.

Yet here Jesus calls these men, and all His disciples, including you and I, a friend.

We are not just tools he uses, we are his partners in the work that he does in this world, we are his friends.

The people of God belong to God and are partners in the work they do for him.

**John 15:16-17**

**<sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, so that you will love one another.**

Jesus tells them that they are chosen, they have a personal relationship with him, that they are called to abide in him, they are his friends.

This is important, he chooses them.

I will try to simplify what Jesus is saying here and it is rather direct and probably a little unsettling for some of you who will hear this.

Firstly, God loves you more than you can ever imagine, he loves you more than you love yourself.

However, He does not love you because you are wonderful, he loves you because He is wonderful.

He loves you because of who He is, not because of what you do.

He chose his disciples and he directs them to go out and bear fruit in His name.

Jesus then repeats that whatever they ask for they shall receive, as long as they are abiding in him, loving him and asking according to his will and his nature, so that can bear fruit in His name.

Then he repeats himself, 'Love one another.'

Then Jesus transitions from the relationship that the disciples are to have with fellow brother and sisters in Christ, to the relationship that they are to expect with the world.

**John 15:18-20**

**<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.**

Jesus has been emphasizing how we are called to live in relationship with him, to love him first, to live lives of obedience to his commands. He has repeatedly said that we are to love one another serve one another, assist one another in loving God and living lives of obedience to God.

And then he says if we do that, the world will hate you.

Jesus is the purest form of love, and the world is hostile to him, it hates him, because of his commandments.

Throughout the Book of John, we have seen Jesus rejected over and over, opposing Him because he talked about change, about living a life according to the Scriptures, about giving up of personal power, personal pleasure and personal pursuit.

The eleven men gathered there in that room would experience hostility and hatred far beyond anything that we experience in North America today.

They were all persecuted and other than John they were all martyred. John did not have an easy life, according to legend, they tried to kill him many times, once by immersing him in boiling oil and he just would not die.

Jesus looked upon his disciples and knew that they would be persecuted, hated and pushed away by the culture they lived in, and he told them it was because they loved him.

Ancient writers, the men who recorded history around the death of Jesus and up until the time that Christianity was accepted as the religion of Rome, called Christians the haters of humanity. They believed that they committed horrible crimes and had horrible traditions. They called them incestuous because they loved their brothers and sisters, and cannibals because they ate the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ in Communion.

Christians were painted with abroad brush as evil by people who believed whatever they were told, because they did not take the time to find out the truth.

According to the world, one of the worst evil that Christians committed involved breaking of a widely accepted tradition of the Roman Empire.

When a family had a child that they did not want they would take that child out of the house right after birth to a special hilltop nearby, where people brought unwanted babies to be exposed to the elements until they died. Those 'evil early Christians' would be waiting nearby and when they saw a baby left on that hilltop, they would go and take it into their own family, raising it as one of their own.

They were called 'the haters of humanity', because they would not go along with the culture they lived in. They would not accept that babies could be killed at will, they would not accept that parties where people ate in excess and drank in excess, while others struggled to survive were acceptable, they would not participate in orgies or have sexual relations outside of marriage and that made them 'haters of humanity'.

And Christians are still experiencing this today. In case you were unaware, more Christians have been executed for their faith in the last hundred and twenty-five years than in the previous nineteen hundred years.

Persecution for your faith is present in the world today, in just the past year there have been Christians killed in North America and in Europe because of sharing the truth of God's Word with people who label them 'haters of humanity'.

The world hates Christianity, because they refuse to conform to what it values, instead they try to live lives according to the Word of God.

Christians should live lives filled with love and kindness, sharing the Word of God with anyone and everyone that we can, and we should expect to be hated for that.

And the more that you lift the Lord up in your life, the more the world will hate you.

**John 15:21-25**

**<sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'**

Why does the world hate Jesus, because they do not know God.

If you are out there in the world showing people who God really is, who the Jesus of the Bible really is, the world will hate you.

Jesus lived a life that was perfectly in accordance with the Word of God and will of God. He taught correctly, he healed, he cared for, he loved, he showed us through his living example what the people of God are supposed to be like in this life. And for all of these things, he was rejected by people who wanted their own way here on earth.

Verse twenty-two is a dire warning, the more you know about the truth of who God is the more you are expected to live in accordance with God's will. That means if you hear the Word of God faithfully and you ignore it; you will have to answer for your lack of accountability.

Jesus showed the world the truth of who God was and they rejected him without reason. And Christians who do the same will also be rejected by the world.

However, you will not be alone.

**John 15:26-27**

**<sup>26</sup> "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning."**

Christians will have the Holy Spirit, who will testify of Jesus in their lives and through their lives. The Holy Spirit will be at work in this world through the faithful, showing people who Jesus is,

showing people, who God is, acting as that light in the dark for the people who are lost in the ways of this world.

The Holy Spirit will be doing the will of God in the lives of the faithful and Jesus tells them that even though it is happening, they will still be persecuted, and they need to hold strong.

**John 16:1-4**

**16 “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. <sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup>And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup>But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.**

**“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.**

Jesus says ‘when I leave, you will face persecution from the religious establishment, in the same way that I am facing persecution from them now’.

Most of the persecution that has come against Christians in this world, has come from people and organizations that claim to be followers of God and other religions.

In the modern world, most Christians are dying at the hands of Muslims, their throat slit because they refuse to denounce Jesus and adhere to the teachings of Islam. In Nigeria it is estimated that nearly seven thousand Christians have been killed by Islamists, in Africa as a total it is more than twenty-two thousand. More than nineteen thousand churches were destroyed, eleven hundred communities disbanded, and six hundred Pastors are missing.

Muslims believe that they are doing God’s work when they do this. The same way that Saul believed he was doing the work of God when he was killing the early Christians, until the day that he met Jesus, and became Paul.

Jesus told his disciples that their message of peace, love and joy would be violently rejected by the world, so much so that they themselves would be persecuted and perhaps even martyred in this world.

So, we should not be surprised when people reject Jesus in their lives and in ours. If you suffer because of your faith, you suffer with Jesus Christ and find your peace in knowing that he was rejected first.

Find your refuge in your suffering, it is an honor to be rejected by the world because of your faith in God. It is expected that the world will persecute you for walking as the Salt and Light of God’s Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

**Holy Trinity, Keep Us in Your Grace**

Almighty and eternal God,  
 God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit,  
 you have shown your rich grace and mercy to us.  
 Eternal Father,  
 you created us at the beginning.  
 Eternal Son of God,  
 for us you became truly human,  
 and for our sins you bore the cross.  
 Eternal Spirit,  
 you proceed from the Father and the Son from eternity,  
 and through your holy Gospel you give us faith and holiness.  
 O one, eternal and almighty God,  
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
 keep us in your grace until our life's end  
 in the eternal blessedness in the life to come. **Amen.**

*Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Trinity (1)*

**Hymn #382: "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart" (V 1,4,5)**

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart,  
 wean it from earth, through all its pulses move.  
 Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,  
 and make me love thee as I ought to love.

Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;  
 teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
 to face the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
 teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,  
 one holy passion filling all my frame:  
 the baptism of the heaven-descended Dove;  
 my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

## **Invitation to Offering**

### **Offering Prayer**

#### **Closing Hymn #411: "Stand Up and Bless The Lord" (V 1,4,5)**

Stand up and bless the Lord;  
 God's people now rejoice;  
 stand up and bless the Lord your God  
 with heart and soul and voice.

God is our strength and song;  
 now is salvation ours.  
 God's love in Christ we now proclaim  
 with all our ransomed powers.

Stand up and bless the Lord;  
 the Lord your God adore;  
 stand up and bless God's glorious name  
 henceforth forevermore.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Loving God,  
 together we have heard you speak to us,  
 welcoming us, forgiving us,  
 teaching us, challenging us.  
 And we have responded to you  
 with praise and confession,  
 listening to your Word,  
 praying in thanksgiving and intercession,  
 and committing ourselves to you anew.  
 It has been good to be together.  
 As we prepare to leave this place,  
 we await your blessing  
 so that we may be comforted  
 by the assurance that you will  
 be with us during the coming week.  
 Continue to speak to us as we seek your face.  
 Guide us by your Holy Spirit.  
 Keep us close to you, we pray,  
 in every aspect of our daily lives,  
 that we may seek your honor and glory

wherever we are and in whatever we do.  
We pray, anticipating your blessing,  
for we pray in the name of Jesus,  
our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Benediction**

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