

**WESTMINSTER CHURCH
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 3B5**

**“Trusting God, nurturing disciples for Christ,
being empowered by the Holy Spirit”**

July 10th, 2022

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

...We Gather to Worship God...

Responsive Call to Worship:

Leader: Let us turn to God with confidence and expectation.

People: In you, O Lord, we place our trust.

Leader: Let us ask God to show us the road to follow.

People: Lead us, O Lord, in your truth and teach us your way in Christ.

Leader: Let us seek hope in the Lord Jesus who is our salvation.

People: All day long we will put our hope in Jesus who saves us.

All: We will worship God in faith, hope and love.

Announcements: We are glad you are with us today and welcome your online voices joining with us.

Birthday Train: We are pleased to acknowledge and celebrate 2 birthdays this week. Pam Dearing on July 10th, and Bonnie Junor on July 13th. Happy Birthday to both of you and may our Lord richly bless you on your birthdays!

Offerings and Tithes: Our Session would like to encourage our members and friends to prayerfully consider your contributions to our ongoing ministry here at Westminster. Contributions may be made in person, by mail, or by e-transfer to office@westminsterchurch.ca. We thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Hymn: 225 A new commandment

Opening Prayer

God of all beginnings, we come today with praise on our lips and in our hearts.

We stand in awe of all you have created: the vast expanse of a starry night and the tiny beauty of a raindrop together reflect your glory.

You have blessed creation with life and meaning.

Your love makes a beginning in us, too, O God,
in each new life born into the world,
in each new friendship formed,
in each kindling attraction,
in each kind word and act for neighbour or stranger.

We praise you, O God, for your love moving in the world around us, lived out in Jesus and by the Spirit at work in us.

All praise and glory belong to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and always.

God of loving kindness, Jesus called us to love you above all else, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Yet we often fail to act in loving ways.

We are distracted by our own needs, fears of the “what ifs”, selfish to the needs of others.

We let differences divide us and excuse ourselves from reaching out.

Forgive us, Father.

Create in us new hearts so we can live and love faithfully in Jesus’ name.

Hear us now Lord as we offer you the prayer your Son Jesus taught us to pray saying: Our Father,
.....Amen.

...We Listen to God’s Word...

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 24:14-15,17-22

New Testament: Luke 10: 25-37

Hymn: 382 Spirit of God, descend upon m heart

Message:

So the lectionary gives us the story of the Good Samaritan as one of our texts for today. It is perhaps one of the best known passages of the New Testament in our world today. There is in fact a legal precedent enshrined in many nations’ legal systems, including Canada’s, whereby if you help someone within the best of your ability you can’t be held liable under the Good Samaritan law for trying your best to help someone who is hurt. It’s one of the best known stories in the world. But most people don’t know the context of the story.

In fact today, I’m not really going to focus on the story of the Good Samaritan, I’m going to focus on the context of the parable. A couple of things to start that I want to point out about the parable. The first is the title...it should just be The Samaritan...Jesus never calls him a “good” Samaritan, he’s just a Samaritan. Titles...even punctuation in the New Testament have been added to the Greek text...they are not scripture. Titles can be helpful and they can be unhelpful as well and I believe this is the case here.

The second thing is that we always seem to boil the message of this story down to one of good works. And when we do that we miss the entire point of the parable and end up sliding into a well known heresy that we get to heaven by being good.

I'll begin today by pointing out that the scene begins with a religious leader trying to trap, to trick Jesus. This isn't a happy discussion here, this is someone who is not out to learn from Jesus but to expose him as a sham...or worse to find a way to condemn him.

The first question of the "expert in the law" is "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" On the surface, you know, it seems like a straightforward question. And if someone asked it of you today what would you answer? You would answer believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household. (Acts 16:30). But at the time, if Jesus did say "believe in me and you will be saved", he would have been stoned to death for heresy. Instead he answers the question of the "expert in the Jewish Law" within the context of the existing Jewish Law and he affirms the experts' answer " "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;" and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Jesus says" "You have answered correctly," "Do this and you will live."

Now if I told you that you had a test tomorrow and there would be 600 questions on it, but if you answered the first two questions correctly you would get an A+...you would take that deal. If I said there are 10 commandments upon which your eternal destiny is determined, .. but if you keep these two...you have the lot. You see, I don't think the expert in Jewish Law expected Jesus to say he was right! –and I'll get to that in a minute.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbour as yourself.

Loved ones, in a world filled with "thou shalt nots" ...here is a command to do...a command to love. Here is the summary of all the commandments...love. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all your soul, all your strength, all your mind. But have you ever loved the Lord with **all** of your heart, all of your soul, all of your strength, all of your mind? We are challenged in this passage to know before we die what 100% love looks like. Now hold that thought.

2–Love your neighbour as yourself...and note that if we did that we would never have to worry about being told not to steal, to lie, to kill, to covet etc...because we would love our neighbour. We don't lie, steal from, malign those we love...we only want the best for them. When we are in love we give, we honour, we nurture, we delight in...what we receive back in return is secondary to our love for them. This commandment obliterates selfishness. Someone once said that the root of all sin is selfishness... and I challenge you to really think about that idea.

But for today, let's look at the idea that in this lesson God is legislating love. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, .Jesus is legislating love. (A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you) .. He's making it a commandment. And hear this, loved ones, if God is commanding us to do something, if God is commanding us

to love Him with **all** of our heart, mind, soul and strength **then that means that it is possible**.and it must also mean that it is within my power, your power, to achieve this. Because it wouldn't be justice to command something that we can't possibly do.

And now we come to the legal experts downfall, because he knows he's lost the argument, the tables have been turned back to him because he starts looking for loopholes. If he'd have just remained silent ... if he'd have just shut up...he'd have been golden in the eyes of his friends, he'd have looked all wise and religiously having gotten Jesus to say he's right in his brilliant summation of the essence of the entire Jewish Law into two love commandments...but he has to ask the next question... "Who is my neighbour?".

He's in trouble in his spirit because he knows he doesn't love his neighbour. He knows he himself isn't able to keep these two commandments because he knows he doesn't love all his neighbours as himself...he knows the expansiveness of the Law itself towards those who were not Jewish...the Laws' dictates towards generosity to the widow and the orphan and the stranger. But he goes looking for loopholes and he shows that he is guilty.

Love has indicted the legal expert...he knows he is guilty. At the end of the parable of the Samaritan Jesus asks the question of the legal expert "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."...note that he can't bring himself to say "the Samaritan" (he remains stuck in the systemic racism of his day between Jew and Samaritan)...our legal expert has a long way to go in learning to love his neighbour but please also note for the second time this morning Jesus tells him to "go and do likewise". We are left to wonder if the expert in the law went on a journey of love or not...but don't miss the fact that Jesus offered to him twice to "go and do likewise". It is important for us all to see that Jesus gives the grace of second chances even to this man who came to trap him.

Let us take note that this message is not about doing good to others, it is about loving others. It is a 2000 year old warning that you can have it all. You can be at the pinnacle of your career. You can have the acclaim of the whole world in your ears, but if you don't have love...the love of all your heart, soul, mind and strength for God and for your fellow man/woman...it counts for nothing.

1st Corinthians 13 cannot be clearer. Paul reminds the Corinthians of this same message: If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 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 do not have love, I am nothing.

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, [b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Loved ones, by the grace of God in Jesus Christ I have already gained the kingdom of God in the life to come...not because of my merits but because of the faith God has given to me in His Son Jesus Christ. But I want to pass the test that is a part of this present life, I want all of you to know the grace that is yours through the love of Jesus Christ but I want all of you to pass the test that is inherent in this life. To love others and to love the Lord fully and completely. I want us to continue to learn together to grow into this fulsome love of our Lord and of our neighbours that this text tells us is available and attainable by the grace of Jesus Christ living in our hearts.

...We Respond in Service...

Prayers of the People:

Lord, when it's all been said and done, when our lives are over, and we stand to give account, what will endure?

Will it be our academic achievements? The number of stocks in our portfolio? The home we laboured for? The money in our bank accounts? The number of our possessions?

No, for as from dust we came and will return, they will be of no further gain to us, for they will be lost to us forever.

Father, teach us that to love and serve you, and to show love to others in deeds of mercy and compassion, are the only enduring legacy of life.

May we focus always on your kingdom and on what you require of us, for this is truly to seek that which stands forever. Amen.

(Adapted from "When it is all said and Done", by Neal Mathers)

Hymn: 471 We are one in the Spirit

Benediction

Announcements for July 10th

1. **Strawberry Social and Bake Sale** at Victoria Presbyterian Church on July 20th, 7-9 p.m. It is self-serve or take-out. **\$10** That should be a yummy summer thing to do!

2. **Children's Choir!** Westminster is going to start a children's choir for the community. We are very excited about this adventure! We are looking for 7 year olds and up who love to sing. Start date is Thursday, September 15th at 6:30 p.m. Please contact me, Charlene Wilson, Peter Scoffield or Westminster Church if you know someone who would like to be part of this.
3. **A Celebration of Life** will be held for Betty Carscadden at Westminster Church on Saturday, July 30th at 10:30am. All are welcome to attend.

Prayers - Wednesday July 6, 2022

Mark 11: 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.

Praise Reports: This was graduation week. Michael Ferlaino, Sam Serré, Wany (Reuben) Mawau Ruathdel - with honours, and Tuti Puol graduated with their Grade Twelve certificate. May this open doors for them for many new endeavors.

Birthdays: Emily Michaud on July 4th. Eunice McEwen and Michael Edwards on July 5th. Shelby Deubel on July 6th. Warren Hull on July 7th. Claude Daoust on July 8th.

Prayers:

Lord we are mindful of the ongoing tragedy and horror of the war in the Ukraine that just seems to continue on each day. Lord we pray for the people who have left the Ukraine and watch from a distance and wait to hear news of loved ones. We pray for those who have stayed and hear shelling every day. Lord be with them and protect those who simply want to live in peace and safety. Give these people hope and comfort, we pray. And please Lord, bring this war to an end.

We pray for the people caught in the shooting in Chicago on July 4th. A day that was supposed to be full of family fun turning so quickly into a complete tragedy. Lord, we pray for those who lost loved ones. Be with them in their pain and anger. Be also with those who are recovering. Give them strength and give them patience.

We continue to pray for Josie who is still in the hospital from a series of issues. We are thankful that she is improving. Be with her, Lord, and may she heal and recuperate quickly. Be with her family who have been giving her support all through this time. Strengthen them, Lord, and give them and Josie's care team wisdom in what are the 'next steps'.

We lift up a person who is struggling with depression and feelings of negative self worth. We pray that he is able to hear the words of encouragement, of hope and of worthiness that come

from others and from You. We also pray for others that we know who are struggling with mental health issues. We bring these names to you and pray that they would seek out help.

Lord, we pray for those who are dealing with cancer.

We pray for Melinda's Uncle Ronny who is in Arch. We thank you that he is still with his family and Melinda was able to contact him after her vacation, share pictures with him and have a visit with him. We pray that each of these last days are special for Ron and for the family.

We pray for Charlotte who as diagnosed with multiple cancers last year and is now on a maintenance program. We pray for the family who are finding the trip to London each month to be somewhat difficult. Give them strength and courage. We pray for Your ongoing watch care and encouragement for Charlotte and her family.

We pray for Grayson who will be finishing his cancer treatment this fall. We pray that he is able to keep on track with treatment this summer so that he is able to meet this goal in the fall.

We pray for Sharon's friend, Patsy, who is recovering from cancer surgery. Lord, we pray for excellent recuperation and ask for your complete healing for Patsy.

We continue to pray for Sharon's friend's husband who has cancer. His chemo begins tomorrow and there is reasonable belief that this treatment should be successful in giving him a number of more years to live. We pray that the treatment will be a positive experience for this man and that their fear and anxiety will be relieved as this treatment begins.

We continue to pray for Peter's sister-in-law who is still battling cancer. Be with her and be with Peter and his family as they try to support her.

Lord, we pray for those who are facing a variety of medical issues.

We pray for Beth's friend's son who was in a very bad accident. Lord, we thank you that he is alive and able to sit up in a wheelchair already. We pray for your continued healing of his multiple injuries and that he will be able to go fishing at some point this summer.

We pray for Emily Michaud's father who broke his hip and is now recovering in hospital. May he do well in physio and be able to get around again.

We pray for Joan Van Bentham who broke her leg a week ago. May she heal quickly and be able to enjoy the summer.

We pray for Carol Jean as she continues to recover from her broken arm. Bless her and give her a speedy recovery.

We pray for Jody Arthurs who broke her leg in a bike accident. Be with her as she waits for the break to heal and recovers from this injury.

We pray for Michael Ferlaino who broke his wrist. He has many things that he wants to do, Lord so we pray that you would grant him a speedy recovery as well. Also grant him patience so that the wrist will have time to heal.

We pray for Charity that you will heal the wound that she has from her back surgery. Lord, please put your healing hand on her and may she know that you are with her during this time of healing and restoration.

We pray for Mary Anne whose husband finally had his heart surgery in Sudbury. May he recuperate fully from this surgery and may they be blessed with a good summer.

We pray for Les Dool and that he would get relief from the shingles that he had in his neck. Do not let him get discouraged, Lord. Assure him that healing will come.

We pray for Jackie and his ongoing health issues. He is doing a little better and really appreciates these prayers for him.

We pray for Noella's son, Guy Thibodeau, who had a massive heart attack last week. Be with him in his recovery. Give him strength.

Other prayers

We pray for Carol and her son, Adam, that their relationship would improve so that they could enjoy each others company again.

We pray for Emily's friend who is looking for an apartment. We thank you that she has a safe place to stay at this time but we pray for something more permanent for her.

We pray for Gene and Leona as they look for an apartment. Help them to find something that will meet their needs and also delight them. Be with them in their search.

We pray for Nicole and her 9 year old daughter Hope who face the loss of Bryan who was their husband and father. Be with them, Lord.

Lastly, Lord, we pray for the churches of St. Paul's and Victoria as they face changes again. May they put their trust in you and experience your presence with them at this time. Amen