

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**  
**'Church at Home' - Sunday 29th March 2020**

**Welcome**

“Welcome to our ‘Church at Home’ resources for 29th March. This morning we are looking at some words of Jesus about how we can be supplied with peace even when we are surrounded by trouble.” - *Rev. Andrew Gill*

**Call to Worship – 130:5, 7**

*I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.  
For with the Lord is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.*

**Prayer**

Look upon me, O Lord,  
and let all the darkness of my soul vanish before the beams of thy  
brightness. Fill me with holy love, and open to me the treasures of thy  
wisdom. All my desire is known unto thee, therefore perfect what thou hast  
begun, and what thy Spirit has awakened me to ask in prayer. I seek thy  
face, turn thy face unto me and show me thy glory. Then shall my longing be  
satisfied, and my peace shall be perfect.

*(Augustine, 354 – 430)*

**The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father...*

**Reading John 16:16-24, 31-33**

‘A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me.’ Then some of his disciples said to one another, ‘What does he

mean by saying to us, “A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me”; and “Because I am going to the Father”?’ They said, ‘What does he mean by this “a little while”? We do not know what he is talking about.’ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, ‘Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, “A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me”? Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labour, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!’

## **Sermon - Living in the Peace of Jesus**

*How do we find peace in times of trouble?*

On the night Jesus was betrayed, just hours before his death he had a meal with his disciples to celebrate the Jewish feast of passover.

As they were eating Jesus was preparing them for what was about to happen. The conversation is recorded in John’s gospel in ch.13-16 and Jesus speaks of his own betrayal and the opposition his followers will face.

But he also comforts them with his promise to send the gift of the Holy Spirit and assures them of his eternal love.

And he finishes by saying, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)*

Living in this world will mean having trouble. But living in Christ means having peace. Through the Holy Spirit Christians are united to Jesus, and have access to his endless peace.

It is similar to the relationship between a branch and the trunk of a tree. In the winter the branch is exposed to the cold, the dark, and to all sorts of storms. But if it stays connected to the trunk it will be safe and will be supplied with all that it needs.

In our life we experience dangers and disease, and all sorts of trials. But if our faith remains in Christ Jesus then he will keep us safe and supply us with his peace.

There are two ways our unity with Jesus can give us peace. Firstly, we are united with him in our suffering. Even though Jesus was the Son of God he was not immune to the troubles of this world. There is no pain we go through that Jesus did not experience on the cross.

Today if you are distressed about what lies ahead, know that as Jesus prays in the garden he tells his disciples that his soul is overwhelmed with sorrow. Or if you feel isolated and alone, know that Jesus was abandoned by all his friends at his arrest.

If you feel like you are being treated unfairly, know that Jesus was wrongly condemned to death by an unjust trial. If you are in pain, know that Jesus was insulted and beaten and tortured. If you feel like your life is held back by all these restrictions, know that Jesus' hands and feet were

nailed to the cross. If feel like this crisis has take too much away from you, know that on the cross Jesus sacrificed his very life.

Jesus shares in our suffering. But the purpose of his suffering was not just to sympathise with us. The purpose of his suffering was to save us. The root of all our suffering in this world is sin. Our world has turned away from God and rejected his ways. We have neglected to care for the earth and its people and have forgotten to love our neighbour as ourselves. We worship money, and comfort, and possession rather than our creator. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way.

Even though Jesus shares in our suffering he does not share in our sin. His suffering was to forgive our sins. The righteous died for the unrighteous to bring us to God.

*The prophet Isaiah explains it like this;*  
*Surely he hath borne our griefs,*  
*and carried our sorrows:*  
*yet we did esteem him stricken,*  
*smitten of God, and afflicted.*  
*But he was wounded for our transgressions,*  
*he was bruised for our iniquities:*  
*the chastisement of our peace was upon him;*  
*and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)*

The cross was not defeat. The cross was victory! Through his death and resurrection Jesus has overcome the world. And if he is united to our suffering then we are united to his victory! That is why he tells the disciples to take heart and be brave. Because he has overcome the world and conquered sin.

The second way we can be supplied with peace is that we are united to Jesus' victory. Think again of a mighty tree and its branches. During the storm the branches bend and hurt, they are blown back and forth. But they will not fall because they are secured to the trunk which cannot be moved.

We are in a great storm at the moment. We are living through difficult and troubling days. But if we put our faith in Jesus Christ then we will not be defeated by them because we are united to the victorious saviour, our strong and mighty God, who has overcome the world.

As the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, *"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed"*

So today if you are disappointed, or heart broken, frustrated or frightened. Then believe in these words of Jesus, "In me you may have peace, Take heart! I have overcome the world". Amen

### **A Prayer about the outbreak**

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;  
in their anxiety, be their hope;

in their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gracious God,  
give skill, sympathy and resilience  
to all who are caring for the sick,  
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.  
Strengthen them with your Spirit,  
that through their work many will be restored to health;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God,  
help me to trust you,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing can separate me  
from your love  
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### **Benediction**

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts  
and our minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.