

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Aberfoyle Park

Home Worship Service

Led by Pastor Andy Kowald

November 21, 2021

Welcome & Introduction

Good morning everyone. Welcome to our time of public worship together – including those of you also joining us on livestream.

Two Sunday's ago I saw all these kids walking the street dressed up. Some were super heroes. Some looked like ghosts!
It was Halloween.

I asked some kids last Sunday were they REALLY Superman? Were they REALLY Wonder Woman? Whether they were REALLY a ghost?

They certainly LOOKED like the super heroes that they dressed up as.

But just because you wear a costume, does that mean that are REALLY Superman etc?

That's one of the fun things about Halloween. You just get to PRETEND to be someone else. Someone that you usually are not. Just for a little while.

Jesus was often trying to teach His followers that there were religious people who just pretend to love God, when they really didn't!

It's not like they put on a show of praying sincerely and then later said, "Hey, just kidding, I'm not really like that!"

No. They were pretending ALL THE TIME!!

Today we read about the fact the Jesus GIVES life! Eternal life. And it starts NOW. In THIS life!

And it's not about pretending to like God!
It's about God liking us. And us liking God. And spending lots of time together!

That's why we like worshipping. Not to fake it, but to share in a real relationship with God. We are worshipping today in the name of the only living God: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

Songs

[Here I Am To Worship](#) CCLI#3266032

[10,000 Reasons](#) CCLI#6016351

Bible Reading

John 5:21-29

²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. ²⁴ “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

Message

Jesus says...

I am telling you the truth: those who hear my words and believe in him who sent me HAVE eternal life. They will not be judged, but have already passed from death to life. John 5:24

Wow...! You do not have to wait until you die before you get eternal life!
I like the sound of THAT!

Those who hear my words and believe in him who sent me have eternal life. They will not be judged, but have already passed from death to life.

And it's up to Jesus! That's what the opening verse said...

²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

As a teenager, that verse about ALREADY having eternal life was one of my favourite verses. So was 1 John 5:12

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I wanted to know, that if I died, I would have eternal life!

I know Jesus...! So I must be OK...

But as it turns out, me knowing Jesus is not the issue! It doesn't matter whether I know Jesus. What matters is: DOES HE KNOW ME! Does He know me as His friend? He will always take His friends wherever He is!

In Matthew 7:12 we read, at the end of time many will say, **Lord, Lord, I did many great things in Your name.** They knew Him! They knew His name! But He will say, **I don't know you... Away from me you evil doers!** They did healings and everything, yet He will call them evil doers, because they didn't have a loving relationship with Jesus, and their heavenly Father. Where they walked and talked together!

In the story just before our reading, Jesus comes across a disabled man. He found him at one of the gates that allow you into Jerusalem – it was called **the Sheep Gate.**

I have read that it was called that because that was the gate where the sacrificial sheep were brought into the temple.

At that gate was a pool of water that had the name which in Aramaic was called **Bethesda.**

In Hebrew **beth** is house, and **hesed** is loving kindness. This pool was called 'House of loving kindness'. A mercy pool!

When the waters moved in the pool, if you could make it, you would be healed. The man that Jesus spoke to had been waiting 38 years. Because he had no one to help him get there in time!

After the man told Jesus that, Jesus basically said **So what! Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!**

Then two things happened to the man...

- Firstly, he got into trouble from the Jews for lifting his mat on the Sabbath!
- And then He seems to be in a little trouble from Jesus too. When Jesus sees the man a little while later, He tells him, **Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you!** (4:26)

What's going on here?

As it turns out, the Gospel writer is trying to help us see that the invalid man was relying on the religious things people do to feel secure before God, VERSES having life – real life, lasting life, eternal life, LOVE-life, GOD-LOVE life.

The invalid man was relying on some old rules about doing it right.

The story mentions that the pool was surrounded by 5 covered colonnades – as though the five books of Moses – the Torah – the Law is what covered you.

Whereas God has always just wanted to talk to us, and play with us, and have fun with us, and give us life that death can't take away! As a result would all be fair with each other, and looked out for each other.

The prophets in the Old Testament were always on about this!

Listen to Isaiah for example...(58:1-12 – Message)

1-3 “Shout! ... Tell my people what's wrong with their lives, face my family Jacob with their sins! They're busy, busy, busy at worship, and love studying all about me. To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people—law-abiding, God-honouring. They ask me, ‘What's the right thing to do?’ and love having me on their side. But they also complain, ‘Why do we fast and you don't look our way? Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?’

3-5 Well, here's why: “... You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist. The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground. Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after: a day to show off humility? To put on a pious long face and parade around solemnly in black? Do you call that fasting, a fast day that I, God, would like?

6-9 “This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on (remember Jesus is the Light of the world!), and your lives will turn around at once ... Then when you pray, God will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, ‘Here I am.’

9-12 “If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins. If you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry ... You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community liveable again.

When Jesus turned up, the Sheep Gate, where the sacrificial lambs entered Jerusalem, now had a visit from THE Lamb of God. And the House of Loving Kindness was not really found in a pool of water at one of Jerusalem's gates. Loving kindness comes flooding out of Jesus!

And how long had the man been waiting! 38 years! THAT is the exact number of years that Israel wandered through the wilderness before entering the Promised land! The Bible DOES talk about it as a 40 year period. But if you don't count the 2 years it took to go from Mount Sinai to Kadesh, then the figure is 38.

Look at Deuteronomy 2:14

Thirty-eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley. By then, that entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them.

The Gospel writer is telling us that Jesus was saying to the disabled man, it's time for you to come out of your wilderness!

He says to the man – and us – I am here to fulfil all your needs! Don't kill off my good healing work by imagining that God wants you to think about yourself, and how religious you are, and always bothering about whether you are going to heaven or not!

Jesus is saying, not only to that man, but also to you and me, **Come alive to ME. Worship and fasting and prayer and reading my Word are all very important, but only if they are a part of our loving relationship!**

I was reminded at Jamie's funeral the other day, that the Christian writer C.S.Lewis once said: be sure to die before you die, because you can't do it after!

This is what Jesus is saying: **Die to yourself, and let Me live in you! Let Me get to know you, and you will be enjoying the fun of helping someone in need.**

- **You will learn to love someone in your family or neighbourhood in a way that others can't.**
- **You will have peace that passes all understanding. A peace that will allow you to suffer injustice on My account. It will surely come. But you will have peace.**

And through it all Jesus will be honoured. And as Jesus is honoured, the Father will be honoured.

It's about His connection with us, as we sang at Charmaine's funeral on Tuesday... **Just a closer walk with Thee**

I am weak but Thou art strong
Jesus keep me from all wrong
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee
Just a closer walk with Thee
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea
Daily walking close to Thee
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be

This song will be played as you receive Christ in Holy Communion today.

Song

Fade Away CCLI#7123197

Confession and Absolution

Dear heavenly Father,
What goodness there is in knowing that we are Your children.
What badness there is in not living in that truth.
What goodness there is in knowing that Jesus offers all the life we could desire.
What badness there is in making choices as though we don't believe this.
What goodness there is in living life, free as a bird, in Jesus.
What badness there is in just being religious.
Please forgive us. Our desire to focus away from Jesus clings to us.
Please forgive us and wash us clean that we might be free to live wholly as Your children.
We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our heavenly Father HAS had mercy on us! He has sent His own Son to die for us. His Word is true, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I therefore declare: Your sin is forgiven! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the powerful fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Prayers

Prayer points to ponder:

- Jesus, help us desire and seek to walk more closely with you, to know you more deeply and to grow our relationship with you. Nothing is more important.
- We pray for our upcoming Christmas production and Carols night, that they may be opportunities for people to see you, to find a new revelation of your love for them and to be filled with joy, hope and peace.
- We lift up our Call process to you and ask for your wisdom and guidance for our Call Committee and for the Pastor you are preparing to call to Our Saviour.
- We pray for Operation Christmas Child and the children and communities who will receive our gifts. May they come to know your love for them.

- We pray for the families and friends of our members who have gone to be with you in heaven. We pray that you will give them comfort, peace and an understanding that can come only from you.
- We think of those countries and people also struggling with the added burden of civil unrest and natural disasters – flooding, fire, drought, earthquakes and volcanoes. We pray for God's mercies on them.
- Be with those struggling with loneliness, depression, financial or health concerns. We pray especially for people in our own community. Remind them of your love and care for them and prompt each of us to reach out to those who need our support and friendship.

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favour, and give you peace. Amen.

Song

[Endless Light](#) CCLI#6177300