



JESUS OF NAZARETH
JESUS IS FOR US (SO THAT WE CAN BE FOR HIM)
MATTHEW 12:1-37
5-24-20

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

NOTE: Please have a white candle ready to light. We will continue to light the candle until we meet again.

Reflect

Ravi Zacharias: Love is a command, not just a feeling. Somehow, in the romantic world of music and theater we have made love to be what it is not. We have so mixed it with beauty and charm and sensuality and contact that we have robbed it of its higher call of cherishing and nurturing.

Welcome

Good morning! Let us remember as we enter into our tenth Sunday apart that we are united together in Jesus Christ. While we are apart, we are connected in Christ. Therefore, may we remain strong in our Holy Spirit solidarity, remembering that the local church is not a building or place but a people who gather in a particular building and at a particular place. We are also reminded of the Church universal, made up of the saints who have died in Christ, those who are now living in Christ all over the globe, and all those who will be living in Christ. We are reminded that we are members and active participants in God's unfolding divine drama today. With this in mind,

May the love and joy of the Father, the grace and peace of the Son and the courage and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ours in abundance. Amen.

Candle Lighting – Light the candle again this week as a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the world!

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.



(the flame casts no shadow)

Call to Worship: adapted from Matthew 11:28-30

Come, all that are weary, all that are carrying burdens so heavy.

Jesus will give us rest.

Come, take what Jesus has to offer: love, forgiveness, and grace.

Christ will give us peace.

Come, find rest, and learn from Jesus.

For our Savior will give us rest in our souls.

Come, let us worship our God.

Let us follow our Savior, who leads us into life.



Song: Our God -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5d_gm9zrnY

*Water You turned into wine, opened the eyes of the blind.
There's no one like you; none like you.*

*Into the darkness You shine, out of the ashes we rise.
There's no one like you; none like you.*

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger! God You are higher than any other!
Our God is Healer, awesome in power! Our God, Our God!*

*Into the darkness You shine, out of the ashes we rise.
There's no one like you; none like you.*

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger! God You are higher than any other!
Our God is Healer, awesome in power! Our God, Our God!*

*And if our God is for us, then who could ever stop us?
And if our God is with us, then what can stand against?
And if our God is for us, then who could ever stop us?
And if our God is with us, then what can stand against?
Then what can stand against?*

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger! God You are higher than any other!
Our God is Healer, awesome in power! Our God, Our God!*

Psalm of Praise: Psalm 145

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works. The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.



Song: Sovereign -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssZMRXim61w>

*Sovereign in the mountain air. Sovereign on the ocean floor.
With me in the calm. With me in the storm.*

*Sovereign in my greatest joy. Sovereign In my deepest cry.
With me in the dark. With me at the dawn.*

In your everlasting arm, all the pieces of my life.

From beginning to the end I can trust you.

*In your never-failing love, You work everything for good
God whatever comes my way, I will trust you.*

Sovereign in the mountain air. Sovereign on the ocean floor.

With me in the calm. With me in the storm.

*Sovereign in my greatest joy. Sovereign In my deepest cry.
With me in the dark. With me at the dawn.*

In your everlasting arm, all the pieces of my life.

From beginning to the end I can trust you.

*In your never-failing love, You work everything for good
God whatever comes my way, I will trust you.*

All my hopes, all I need, held in your hands.

All my life, all of me, held in your hands.

All my fears, all my dreams, held in your hands.

In your everlasting arm, all the pieces of my life.

From beginning to the end I can trust you.

*In your never-failing love, You work everything for good
God whatever comes my way, I will trust you.*

Song: Lord, I Need You -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuvfMDhTyMA>

Lord, I come, I confess, bowing here I find my rest.

Without You I fall apart. You're the One that guides my heart.

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You. Every hour I need You.

My one defense, my righteousness. Oh God, how I need You.

Where sin runs deep Your grace is more. Where grace is found is where You are.

Where You are, Lord, I am free. Holiness is Christ in me.

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You. Every hour I need You.

My one defense, my righteousness. Oh God, how I need You.

So teach my song to rise to You, when temptation comes my way.

When I cannot stand I'll fall on You. Jesus, You're my hope and stay.

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You. Every hour I need You.

My one defense, my righteousness. Oh God, how I need You.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy of me, a sinner.



Offering

We remember that giving is an act of faith, a practice of hope and an expression of love.

We call giving an act of stewardship. Stewardship means “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.” How does this help shape our motive *for* and delight *in* giving?

(You can give by sending your offering to the church, P.O. Box 217, Oakdale Ca 95361 or consider giving online through your bank. Our deacons can help you with this if necessary.)

Youth Celebration

Graduation! It is a significant accomplishment to graduate for it signifies persistent success. Graduation also signifies progress, of next steps and new opportunities. Here are our six graduates:



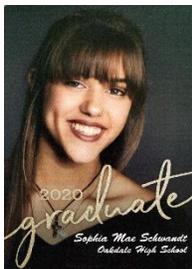
Kenzie Hoekstra has graduated from Ripon Christian Junior High



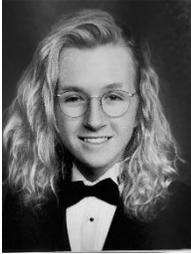
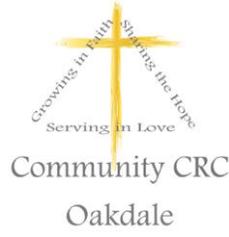
Dustin Hoekstra has graduated from Ripon Christian Junior High



Kaci Jericoff has graduated from Oakdale Junior High



Sophia Schwandt has graduated from Oakdale High



Michael Medlin has graduated from Oakdale High



Deonna Osmundson has graduated from Chico State University

A hearty congratulations to all our graduates! (virtual high fives, fist bumps, hugs and handshakes!!)

Prayer: Almighty God, Thank you for these six graduates! We celebrate their accomplishment and hard work! May their next steps in education and life glorify you and bring them much joy as disciples of yours. As we have sung, may they always recognize and humbly surrender their needs to you, Jesus as their Lord and Savior. May they continue to grow into men and women who faithfully honor and follow you to be salt and light in this world. In Jesus' name, Amen!

We also celebrate all our youth at CCRC. The last two weeks we have celebrated their contribution of passion and being image bearers of God to CCRC. This week we celebrate their active involvement within CCRC as agents of ministry (adapted from Shane Stacey).

Youth are not merely objects of ministry; they are rightful agents of ministry, today, as part of the larger intergenerational family of God.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians about the implications of the gospel when it comes to who we are as the called-out people of God, he says leaders were given by the Holy Spirit to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. He states the results of this equipping is that everyone will be able to push the gospel deeper into one another's lives. Now, don't you find it interesting that in this same letter Paul includes instructions to employers and employees, husbands and wives, but also to parents AND children (Ephesians 6:1-4). Paul assumed that youth were not only present in the reading of the letter, but also active participants in the body of Christ and ministers in their own right.

Youth are more than merely capable to engage the disciple-making mission of God, they are critical to its completion! They are co-laborers and co-creators now. They are not simply, "the next generation." They received the same Holy Spirit as you and I. They possess gifts to awaken, nurture and activate for the benefit of the body and the advancement of the gospel. Youth are not mere objects of ministry; they are agents of reconciliation to the world.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 12:1-37

It is important to remember and read a passage in context. This passage is no exception. Jesus has just spoken some profoundly comforting and promising words, **"Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly**



in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Chapter 12 follows this so it is not surprising to read about Jesus confronting the legalist, elder-brother, lost Pharisees on the topic of labor and rest. Verses 1-21 deal with this directly. Then, in verses 22-37 Jesus exposes the heart of a legalist and that our words are revelatory and they matter. Here we encounter some profoundly hard-hitting words of truth from Jesus and possibly some of his most misunderstood and feared words. Indeed, many people have asked (maybe you too), “have I committed the unforgivable sin?” Keep in mind the context and who Jesus is speaking to as you read today’s passage. Please read Matthew 12:1-37.

Gospel Message: Jesus is For Us (so that we can be for him)

In context, it is Saturday the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day was the central and most important day of the week for the Jews. (This is a good thing and something that should be true of us today, but that is another sermon). Genesis 2:2-3 says, “And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.” And Exodus 20:8-10 says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.” This is the 3rd commandment. Over time, the Jewish leaders came to remember the Sabbath not for what it was for (rest, holiness) but for what it was not (don’t do this or that). This is a bad thing and what we will focus on this morning. They came to recognize 39 different categories of work that was prohibited on the Sabbath. Furthermore, each of these categories had many sub-categories of “thou shall nots.” Not surprisingly, the Sabbath became a day that many Jews developed a distaste for because they feared breaking one of the many laws they were forbidden to do, and thereby sin and fall under God’s condemnation. So, what Matthew will be pointing out is that the Sabbath, a day of rest had become a day laden with the burden and weight of worrying about law breaking, just the opposite of what Jesus and the Sabbath are all about.

In our first scene, on the Sabbath day, the disciples are hungry and pick heads of grain to eat. No biggie right? Wrong. This was against one of the many laws the Jewish leaders had set up that was considered work and therefore forbidden on the Sabbath. In the legalist, elder-brother, lost Pharisee’s eyes, Jesus’ disciples are lawbreakers and stand guilty and condemned. Jesus undoes this legalist lynching knot by exposing their heart. He says that they don’t understand that God desires mercy over sacrifice; that he wants internally driven acts of grace rather than externally driven acts of law. But, because they were focused on keeping the external acts of the law, they neglected their heart....and it hardens, becoming merciless and graceless and capable of “condemning the guiltless.” Jesus caps this scene with the grand declaration that the “Son of Man is the lord of the Sabbath.” The religious legalist had flipped this and made the Sabbath lord over the Son of Man. Jesus reasserts the truth that the Sabbath serves the purposes of Jesus and humanity, not the other way around. The Sabbath is a day of rest, holiness, mercy and acts of love and grace towards one another. This fits perfectly into what Jesus previously said at the end of chapter 11 about coming to him for rest. He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Jesus then pushes the point even further. He enters the central place of the city, the synagogue where he again is met by religious, elder brother, legalistic, merciless, Sabbath is lord over man kind of people who want to find fault with Jesus so they can accuse him and condemn him. They want to



expose him as a lawbreaker. Another of the many legalistic laws was that a person could not be healed on the Sabbath if it could wait until the next day. You see how the day had wrongly become more important than the person? Jesus masterfully sets up his imminent healing of the man with the withered hand by showing the status of their hardened, unmerciful hearts. He says that they readily rescue a sheep that falls into a pit on the Sabbath (apparently, he has seen some of them do this). If this is good and ok, then rescuing a more valuable human is good to! To their question, Jesus then offers a demonstrative YES, that it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath by healing the man with the withered hand right in front of them. They do not approve and begin “conspiring against him” to “destroy him.” Their hearts are exposed by their pre-meditated plan to murder Jesus of Nazareth.

Pause a moment and let that sink in.....Jesus, who has never sinned; who is “gentle and lowly of heart”; who heals and renews and loves and shows compassion and mercy; who is the very prophet, priest and king they are praying and waiting for is the very person they want to what? Destroy! This word carries an extra bit of angst against the person they want to kill and demolish. How had they gone so far astray that they couldn’t even recognize the Messiah, living and breathing, healing and teaching right in front of them? I wonder how far off I am and maybe you are? Would we recognize Jesus if he moved into our neighborhood, was in our family or our town?

Matthew then dials it back a bit but only to bring up the volume on who Jesus of Nazareth is. He is amplifying Jesus above the monotonous drone of worldly noises that might distract us from the real Jesus. Matthew’s longest Old Testament quote, Isaiah 42:1-3 serves to reassert who Jesus is – at full volume. Please re-read Matthew 12:18-21. Jesus is God’s “beloved” servant; God’s chosen one with whom God is “well pleased”; the one that God has put his Spirit upon; the one who will not quarrel; the one who will not break a “bruised reed” or snuff out a “smoldering wick”; the one who proclaims and brings justice. This Jesus is the one they want to destroy, wipe out, kill. Friends, we are the bruised reed and smoldering wick. We are the ones to whom Jesus of Nazareth extends his hands of grace and mercy to heal us, forgive us and make us new. **Matthew is saying that Jesus of Nazareth is for us, not against us! Jesus of Nazareth is the one who says, “Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest!”** Take a few moments to talk about these amazingly beautiful descriptors of Jesus of Nazareth. What are you feeling and thinking? What stands out to you? What hadn’t you noticed before?

Okay, we now have adequately set the context for the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit and the unforgiveable sin in verses 22-37. Matthew now goes full throttle with Jesus’ hard-hitting words of truth against the religious, legalistic, elder-brother, hard-hearted, wanting Jesus destroyed Pharisees. The scene starts out like many of Jesus’ scenes, him healing a person. In this case, the person is demon possessed and cannot see or speak. Jesus’ authoritative grace and mercy rids him of the demon, opens his eyes so he can see and opens his mouth so he can speak. In doing so, Jesus visibly demonstrates that he will not break this bruised reed of a man nor quench this smoldering wick of person but heal him and enliven him with sight and speech. Beautiful right? Yes! Of course! Jesus is for us, not against us! But this is not what the legalistic, hard-hearted, mercy deficient, lost, elder-brother Pharisees think at all. They don’t see mercy or grace or love or healing or restoration or renewal or hope. They don’t see the Spirit of God in Jesus. They don’t see Jesus being for them. They see threat, antagonism, danger, menace and peril in Jesus. They only see Jesus against them. Even worse, they see Satan! They accuse Jesus of being possessed by the prince of demons, Beelzebul! It does not get any worse than this! There is nothing more antithetical to what it means to be human than to murderously call the



Holy Spirit, Satan. Let us be clear. The Pharisees are saying that the work Jesus of Nazareth just did of healing a blind and mute person by casting out a demon is demonic and of Satan!

Jesus graciously, (he still moves first with grace, even in the face of hostility) shows the accusers how ridiculously illogical and unreasonable their words against him are and uses the metaphor of robbing a house to show his redemptive work (yep, pretty strange, but effective). If Jesus is on Satan's side, why would he be against himself by casting out himself? That makes no sense; a kingdom against itself cannot stand. Jesus then says plainly that he is casting out the demons by the Spirit of God and that the kingdom of God is amongst them. In other words, he is doing his redemptive work as the Son of God and by the Holy Spirit in him. That is what is happening here. Jesus is saying that this redemptive work involves binding up the strongman (Satan) and plundering his house (taking those under his control – like the man he just healed). Jesus is stronger than the strongman! He is for God's chosen people by saving them from the control of Satan. He isn't Satan casting out Satan, but God casting out Satan. Furthermore, if Jesus casts out demons by Satan, then by whom do the Pharisees sons cast them out, he asks? They would say, not by Satan of course, but by the power of God! Jesus is implying that he too is casting out demons by the Spirit of God.

Okay, that was a bit complicated and convoluted. So, Jesus simplifies things next. He says look, there are only two kinds of people in the world. No more. No less. These two groups of people are described by Jesus of Nazareth as those *for* him and those *against* him; those who gather with him and those who scatter without him (think laborers - evangelists and harvest - evangelized that we talked about 2 weeks ago). We might say the two groups are those on the pendulum of lostness – younger and elder brothers – and those off the pendulum of lostness and in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is important. Remember that Jesus of Nazareth is for us, for you and for this world. **Thus, to be a disciple of his, in his image and likeness, is to be for him, for others, for his purposes, for his kingdom and his ways. We are not to be known for what we are against** (that is implied by what we are for). The legalistic, hard-hearted, merciless Pharisees are being shown for what they are against – Jesus of Nazareth. They are “against” kind of people, fault finders and blind to mercy and love.

Finally comes the “therefore” or, “this is what follows given what I have just told and shown you.” Every sin and word spoken against Jesus (= blaspheming) can be forgiven but “whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.” Okay, let's first address what's on everyone's mind right now, the elephant in the room. “Did I commit the unforgivable sin?” If you are worried that you might have committed the “unforgiveable sin,” you haven't. People who are committing the unforgiveable sin do not worry about it or even think about it. It is not even on their radar. The feeling you are feeling may be false guilt (not believing you are forgiven in Christ of any and all sin) or the Holy Spirit convicting you about sin so that you might repent and turn away from it back to the gospel. That is a good thing! Does that mean, Phew! Now I can keep sinning and not worry about it. Of course not. We keep fighting the good fight of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit our entire lives. We don't sin more so that grace may abound more (Romans 6:1).

So, what actually is the unforgivable sin? How would you answer that given the context that we just went through in Matthew 12? First, it is a sin against the Holy Spirit and not Jesus. In fact, any sin or word against Jesus can be forgiven. But not the Holy Spirit. There is mystery here. The Holy Spirit is the One who regenerates dead lives, applies the saving work of Jesus to us, convicts of sin, encourages and prays on our behalf. It is by the Spirit we cry “Abba, Father!” Speaking against the Spirit of God, the



Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit is the epitome of a rebellious, unrepentant, hardened heart that has been given over to its sinfulness (Romans 1). It is more like evidence than an event. Therefore, and secondly, the unforgivable sin is not a single sin or a repeated but fought against sin like envy or lust. **The unforgivable sin is a lifetime of willful unbelief and persistent rebellion.** It is a lifetime of elder-brother, legalistic, hard-hearted, mercy-impooverished, Jesus you have the spirit of Satan and I want you dead kind of believing and living. It is a lifetime of younger-brother, licentious, hollow-hearted, mercy-impooverished, Jesus you're just a nice guy and I will do what I want, when I want and how I want kind of living. It is willfully and persistently refusing to see the grace, love, mercy, and kingdom authority of Jesus. It is conspiring against Jesus. It is willful and persistent unbelief in Jesus. It is denying that Jesus is the Son of God who the Father sent because he so loved his world that whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have eternal life. These Pharisees were committing the unforgivable sin by their willful unbelief, persistent rebellion and hatred towards Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus concludes with the principle that a tree and its fruit are supposed to match. A good tree is supposed to produce good fruit and a bad tree is supposed to produce bad fruit. He then mic drops this confrontation by calling the legalistic, hard-hearted, elder-brother, mercy-impooverished, lost Pharisees metaphorically a "brood of vipers" and plainly, "evil." Their words were poisonous and wicked. Furthermore, their words would condemn them on Judgment Day. This is sobering. So may our words *about* Jesus of Nazareth match our hearts *for* Jesus. May we use our words to praise, celebrate, magnify, glorify, show, reveal, elevate and love Jesus of Nazareth. **May we, as individuals and corporately as Community CRC be known for what we are for – Jesus Christ and his Kingdom – and not for what we are against.** May we be justified by our words for Jesus of Nazareth. And, may we do this through the person and power of God the Holy Spirit. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we confess that we don't always use our words well, towards you and towards others. Especially behind the safety of a glowing screen and the comfort of a chair, we can spew out or support words that we would never utter in public. Forgive us for not being for you, for others or for your kingdom in this world as we could. We pray for you to keep our hearts softened in Christ. We pray for you to help us stay gospel focused and off the pendulum of lostness. We pray that you deepen our mercy towards others. We pray that you do this all through the loving and life-transforming work of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Communion Meditation

Ravi Zacharias once said, "Death is either a full stop or a comma. In the Christian worldview, it is a comma. There is for the Christian both the passing of all things and the abiding in Christ's provision. The resurrection makes the difference. Jesus's triumph over death captures my defeat and takes me into his victory."

Because of Jesus, death does not have the last word nor is it an enemy to be feared. Because of Jesus, death is a comma, not a period; because of Jesus, death is a doorway and not a barrier; because of Jesus, death is a beginning and not an end; because of Jesus, death is an opportunity and not an obstacle; because of Jesus, love has the final word and not death; because of Jesus, there is victory and not defeat. **Because of Jesus, God is for us and not against us.**

As we meditate on the act of communion that we miss out on because of the quarantine, may we recognize that because of Jesus, everything is different; including death itself.



Professing: (Apostles Creed)

**We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose and ascended to heaven
Where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Proclaiming (1 Corinthians 11:23b-25) – Paraphrased

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it saying, "this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the meal he took the cup of wine and pouring it out said, "this wine is my blood, a new covenant of grace poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

What did God draw your attention to in Ravi Zacharias' quote, the Apostle's Creed or 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25?

Song: Yes, I Will -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ssozypj0fnM>

*I count on one thing, the same God that never fails,
Will not fail me now. You won't fail me now.
In the waiting, the same God who's never late,
Is working all things out. You're working all things out.
Yes I will, lift You high in the lowest valley. Yes I will, bless Your name.
Oh, yes I will, sing for joy when my heart is heavy. All my days, oh yes I will.
I count on one thing, the same God that never fails,
Will not fail me now. You won't fail me now.
In the waiting, the same God who's never late,
Is working all things out. You're working all things out.
Yes I will, lift You high in the lowest valley. Yes I will, bless Your name.
Oh, yes I will, sing for joy when my heart is heavy. All my days, oh yes I will.
And I choose to praise; to glorify, glorify the Name of all names;
That nothing can stand against. Oh, yes I will, lift You high in the lowest valley.
Yes I will, bless Your name. Oh, yes I will, sing for joy when my heart is heavy.
All my days, oh yes, I will. For all my days, oh yes, I will.*

Sending as Disciples of Jesus: Matthew 28:18-20 (Paraphrased)

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore, as we are sent into the world by him, let us make disciples of all, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. And let us remember and treasure that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age. Amen!

Go in God's grace and truth, knowing that because he is for us, we can be for him and for others.