

## **JESUS OF NAZARETH**

### **KINGDOM OF GOD PART 1: PRESENT BUT UNIMPRESSIVE – FOR NOW!**

**MATTHEW 13:24-43**

**6-14-20**

#### **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**

Frederick Douglass: The thing worse than rebellion is the thing that causes rebellion.

#### **Welcome**

Good Morning! A new day has dawned with new mercies and new opportunities to glorify God with our lives of faith that look to him, trust him and are shaped by him in thought, word and deed. We gather as our country becomes more agitated and restless – that is not all a bad thing. There are things in this world we are to be agitated about. Racism is evil. There are things in this world that ought to cause unrest because “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (Martin Luther King). With the cry of protest, may we be quick to listen and slow to speak. There is much for us to hear and learn before we can respond with understanding and compassion and love. We gather united in Christ but with different feelings and thoughts about our situation. We gather as brothers and sisters in Christ but with different experiences and passions. There is a diversity in unity and a unity in diversity that is found in Christ. We see this most clearly in our triune God, three yet one and one yet three. May we seek unity and flourishing for all peoples through a robust, experiential understanding of the gospel. With this is 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 today.**

#### **Call to Worship:** 1 Chronicles 16:23-27

Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.

#### **Candle Lighting** – Light the candle as a reminder that God is Light (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)!

C.S. Lewis once said, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” Indeed, the light of the Holy Spirit allows us to believe in the Triune God and see the world from a new and godly (enlightened) perspective.

#### **Psalm of Praise:** Psalm 148

Our Psalm of praise focuses on ... praise! In reading the Psalm, keep track of who the Psalmist is telling to praise the Lord. It is quite the list!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you



highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

**Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created. And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word!**

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and maidens together, old men and children!

**Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord!**

12 times we are told to praise the Lord in this Psalm! To praise something is to admire, commend, approve, value, delight in, glorify, express favor, honor, make much of and magnify. One of the ways to develop our ability and desire to praise is to “behold our God.” That is, look at and draw our attention to him. We often have our eyes elsewhere and on other things and it shows in what we praise (sports, weather, business success, spouse, children, clothes, etc.) May this song be a song that draws our gaze to God and leads to heartfelt praise to him.

**Song:** Behold Our God -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqrli3Lkf58>

*Who has held the oceans in his hands? Who has numbered every grain of sand?  
Kings and nations tremble at his voice. All creation rises to rejoice.*

*Behold our God, seated on his throne. Come, let us adore him.  
Behold our king, nothing can compare. Come, let us adore him.*

*Who has given counsel to the Lord? Who can question any of his words?  
Who can teach, the one who knows all things? Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?*

*Behold our God, seated on his throne. Come, let us adore him.  
Behold our king, nothing can compare. Come, let us adore him.*

*Who has felt the nails upon his hands? Bearing all the guilt of sinful man.  
God eternal, humbled to the grave. Jesus, Savior, risen now to reign.*

*Behold our God, seated on his throne. Come, let us adore him.  
Behold our king, nothing can compare. Come, let us adore him.*

*You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)*

*Behold our God, seated on his throne.  
Come, let us adore him.*

**Law:** Deuteronomy 6:4-5

**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**



The law of love is the law that rules over all other laws. In Matthew 22:36-40 Jesus is asked what the greatest law is. His response probably shocked the questioner as they were likely expecting one of the ten commandments to be cited by Jesus. Instead Jesus says it is love; all out love for God (heart, mind, strength) and loving others as yourself. May we strive to teach love and live love. A key component of love is mercy. The following is a prayer asking for God's mercy (love) towards us as we struggle with the pandemic and protests.

**Prayer for Mercy and Peace** (Adapted from Kevin DeYoung)

O great God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the God who created all things, the God above all gods, the God who was, and is, and is to come, the God who never changes, the God who never slumbers nor sleeps, have mercy upon us.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic. More than 120,000 lives lost in this country alone. We hear of new cases, new hospitalizations, new deaths each day.

**Lord have mercy.**

In the last three months over 40 million Americans have entered the ranks of the unemployed. Many who still have a job are scared. Others are anxious, depressed.

**Lord have mercy.**

As states re-open some cities and neighborhoods, even some families and churches, are sniping at each other over masks or no masks, re-open quickly or re-open slowly, COVID is worse than you think or this has been a massive over-reaction.

**Lord have mercy.**

As Christians, we have grieved to be separated from the people we love and care for. We have been forced to give up meeting together for a time. So much about ministry seems harder, more uncertain, less fulfilling. We don't fully know when normal will return, or what normal will look like, or what to do in the meantime.

**Lord have mercy.**

On May 25, a white police officer in Minneapolis put his knee on the neck of George Floyd for eight minutes, murdering a black man made in the image of God, while three other officers did nothing to stop the injustice.

**Lord have mercy.**

The anger and fear and pain felt in the black community isn't prompted by this one incident alone. It comes out of the legacy of slavery, and Jim Crow, and too many times where power and force were used against them in ways that are evil and unjust.

**Lord have mercy.**

Every time we witness another tragedy like this we know it makes the difficult and honorable job of law enforcement almost impossible. Many police officers—risking their lives to serve and protect—will suffer unfairly because of actions done a thousand miles away, actions they condemn, actions outside their control.

**Lord have mercy.**

And now we see dozens and dozens of our great cities are torn apart by senseless destruction and



violence. Businesses have been burnt down. Grocery stores destroyed. Neighborhoods ruined. Lives threatened or lost.

**Lord have mercy.**

You have our attention. O God, give us ears to hear. What do you want to say to us in your Word? What should we do? What needs to change? How can we help?

We pray for whatever necessary reforms might give hope and healing and dignity and the feeling of safety for our black brothers and sisters. We pray for bravery and safety, and fortitude for our law enforcement officers. We pray for our political, religious, and civic leaders. May they be humble, honest, measured, principled, open to good ideas wherever they come from, self-sacrificing, disciplined, courageous, and compassionate. Where we have such leaders may we listen to them and follow them. Where our leaders do not exhibit these qualities, help them to change and repent. We seek the peace of our city and all the cities of this great country.

**We weep. We lament. We mourn. But not as those who have no hope.**

May gospel beauty rise from these smoldering, literal ashes. May truth triumph over lies and grace conquer lawlessness. May your people be one as you, O Father, and your Son are one. May the church—the body of Christ, the bride of Christ—rise up as an example of love and with a message of salvation for a weary and war-torn world. Give us grace to serve you, O God, and, if necessary, grace to suffer for what is right. Give us the peace and health and safety we do not deserve. Give us the reformation and revival we need.

**Lord have mercy.**

**Song:** He Will Hold Me fast -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=936BapRFHaQ>

*When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;  
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.  
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;  
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.*

*He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.*

*Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me fast;  
Precious in his holy sight, He will hold me fast.  
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last;  
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.*

*He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.*

*For my life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast;  
Justice has been satisfied; He will hold me fast.  
Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast  
'Till our faith is turned to sight, When He comes at last!*

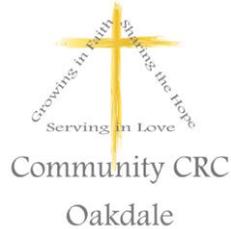
*He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.*

**Offering**

Hope

LOVE

Faith



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

(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**

Remember the five main reasons youth are an important presence within our congregation? They were: (1) they are image bearers of God, (2) passion, (3) agents of ministry now, (4) value relationships and (5) culture connectors. Now, most of us were probably thinking of our youth above age 5 or so. But what about our little ones? What about or infants? Yes, they too are vital members of our community. Their wiggles and giggles and sometimes cries are wonderful, beautiful and welcomed sounds within our congregation. They speak toward youthfulness, new life and vitality. May we never give the young parent(s) an eye of disdain, judgement, anger, or hostility of any kind because they might be distracting us. Yes, there are times when the infant or young child needs to be taken out, but when that rare time comes, may we respond in love and with compassion and empathy. When we think of the next 100 new people to grace the doors of our church, may we be thinking and praying for many infants so that we might have more wiggles and giggles to celebrate!

### **Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:24-43**

Out series, Jesus of Nazareth continues with Jesus addressing the crowds from a boat a little offshore on the Sea of Galilee. He is speaking to them in parables which are common and recognizable stories that teach a significant spiritual truth. We just worked through the parable of the four soils, recognizing that three of the soils (hearts) were in the end, hostile to the gospel and ended up not bearing any fruit because of a lack of understanding (hard soil); persecution (rocky soil) or the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke it to death (thorny soil). **Only the soil in which the gospel yielded fruit was designated as “good.”**

In our passage today, and for the next two weeks Jesus focuses his parables on the “kingdom of heaven.” He is going to be telling us that the kingdom of heaven is like such and such. Now, the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven is often poorly and even incorrectly understood even though it is a massive doctrine of the Bible. So big that some people use it as a lens through which to understand the overarching message of redemption. This week we will study three parables: the parable of the wheat and tares, mustard seed and leaven. The latter two sit “sandwiched” between the telling of the parable of the wheat and tares and the explanation given by Jesus to its meaning. Whenever you see an author in the New Testament “sandwich” material that seems unrelated at first to the material around it, pay particular attention to that middle material. The author is often times using it to help interpret or augment the meaning of the material around it. The latter is the case here. **The parable of the mustard seed and the leaven augment the teaching of the parable of the wheat and the tares.**

Please read Matthew 13:24-43 now.

### **Gospel Message: Kingdom of God Part 1: Present but Unimpressive – For Now!**

Question: What is the kingdom of heaven? How does the Bible paint the picture?

First, we need to clear up some misunderstandings people might have regarding the kingdom of heaven (God). It has become common to say that we are to build the kingdom or advance the kingdom or grow the kingdom. Unfortunately, none of these are based on biblical passages except the one



parable we will deal with today which is most likely not about growth but about brilliance, impressiveness, magnificence, grandeur and splendor.

George Ladd, a noted theologian who brought the doctrine of the kingdom back into regular usage had this to say about the kingdom of God:

“The Kingdom can draw near to men (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; etc.); it can come (Matt. 6:10; Luke 17:20; etc.), arrive (Matt. 12:28), appear (Luke 19:11), be active (Matt. 11:12). God can give the Kingdom to men (Matt. 21:43; Luke 12:32), but men do not give the Kingdom to one another. Further, God can take the Kingdom away from men (Matt. 21:43), but men do not take it away from one another, although they can prevent others from entering it. Men can enter the Kingdom (Matt. 5:20; 7:21; Mark 9:47; 10:23; etc.), but they are never said to erect it or to build it. Men can receive the Kingdom (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), inherit it (Matt. 25:34), and possess it (Matt. 5:4), but they are never said to establish it. Men can reject the Kingdom, i.e., refuse to receive it (Luke 10:11) or enter it (Matt. 23:13), but they cannot destroy it.

They can look for it (Luke 23:51), pray for its coming (Matt. 6:10), and seek it (Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31), but they cannot bring it. Men may be in the Kingdom (Matt. 5:19; 8:11; Luke 13:29; etc.), but we are not told that the Kingdom grows. Men can do things for the sake of the Kingdom (Matt. 19:12; Luke 18:29), but they are not said to act upon the Kingdom itself. Men can preach the Kingdom (Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:9), but only God can give it to men (Luke 12:32).” (The Presence of the Future, 193)

While we do not build or grow the kingdom, we do expose and invite people to receive it and enter into it. This entering and filling is like adding people to a stadium and not like adding to a family. The stadium doesn't grow as more people enter in but it does fill and become more magnificent. Kevin DeYoung, noted Reformed theologian and pastor, after quoting the above from George Ladd had this to say:

“To borrow a tired cliché, the kingdom is what it is. It does not expand. It does not increase. It does not grow. But the kingdom can break in more and more. Think of it like the sun. When the clouds part on a cloudy day we don't say, “the sun has grown.” We say, “the sun has broken through.” Our view of the sun has changed or obstacles to the sun have been removed, but we have not changed the sun. The sun does not depend on us. We do not bring the sun or act upon it. The sun can appear. Its warmth can be felt or stifled. But the sun does not grow (science guys, don't get all technical, you know what I mean). This seems a good analogy for the kingdom.”

This is what Jesus is getting at with the three parables: the kingdom of heaven is present but right now it looks rather unimpressive. However, when Jesus comes again it will shine in all its magnificent glory. Why? Because all evil will have been judged and removed. The heavens and the earth will have been completely purified, like gold being purified from the dross by fire. Another way to say this is that the kingdom is already present but not fully realized or that it has been inaugurated but not consummated. This is sometimes called, realized eschatology. That is, the future has broken into the present with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What will be has been shown by what now is in and through Jesus Christ. Now the Church and her disciples give witness to it verbally and visibly. Let's take a closer look at the three parables and how we get to this understanding.

The first parable in today's passage is the parable of the wheat and tares (also known as the parable of the weeds). As with last week's parable of the soils, Jesus interprets this for the disciples so we have a crystal-clear understanding of what Jesus means. The field is the world that Jesus and Satan both have sons in,



sons of the kingdom and sons of the evil one respectively. At the end of the age, when Jesus returns again to judge the living and the dead, his angels will separate out “ALL causes of sin and ALL law-breakers” by throwing them out into the fiery furnace (hell). Then the righteous will “shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father.” In other words, from now until Jesus comes again, evil and good will co-exist, side by side. Evil cannot be removed without removing good at the same time. It is a one-time, future event. While it is defeated, it remains until the end. Therefore, the world will not progressively get better until it is nearly perfected. There is no utopia in our future this side of eternity. Evil will continue to cast its shadow on the kingdom of heaven. The wicked will continue to obscure the kingdom of God like a cloud obscures the light of the sun.

But it is here. The kingdom of God is present. It is a reality now. That is good news! The kingdom of God is open and present for those with the eyes of faith to see. And, as disciples of Jesus we are citizens of it. We are at home in the kingdom of God. We are accepted in the kingdom of God. We have entered into the kingdom of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The empires of the world are not our home. They are like squatters that will be evicted when Christ returns and heaven and earth are united under the reign and rule of God. The kingdom will one day be fully realized here on earth. Revelation portrays the presence and reign of God as a city coming out of heaven to earth when the Lord’s prayer plea will finally and fully be realized, “Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.” May this reality give us hope and encourage us to be beautifully bold in our interaction with others.

The next two short parables reinforce this truth. The parable of the mustard seed shows that just as the tiny, unimpressive seed will one day become a magnificent tree that the birds of the air will nest in so too will the kingdom of God start out in unimpressive fashion but will become unmistakably glorious. Two images will help here. First, think of Jesus himself. Isaiah 53:1-3 says this of him:

**“Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”**

Jesus’ looks were unimpressive. He did not stand out. He did not attract people by his appearance. He seemed like an ordinary, average, regular, everyday guy. But we know better by faith. We read about the miracles, his teachings, his perfect life and death that defeats sin and satisfies God’ punishment and wrath, his resurrection and ascension that defeats death and establishes a new expression of being that we will one day share with him and we don’t see the ordinary, average, regular everyday guy. We see Jesus Christ the Son of God, the new and better Adam, the Messiah, the King of kings and the Lord of Lords, the creator and redeemer of our lives who is for us and who unites us with himself and the Father through the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Paul says, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” 1 Corinthians 13:12. Jesus will one day return in all his glory as the King of kings – his magnificence will be unmistakable.



Another image of Jesus’ point is the giant sequoia tree found not that far south of us in Kings Canyon and Sequoia





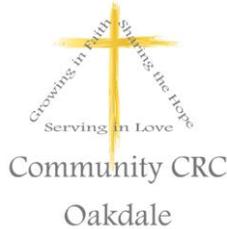
national park. One tiny seed of the 200 found in a cone the size of a walnut will eventually produce a tree over 250 ft. tall and 36 feet in circumference and become one of the biggest trees in the entire world. What starts out unimpressive, ordinary and like the other trees becomes something of immense grandeur, magnificence and beauty. (Note the people at the bottom of the tree for reference of its size.) Again, the parable is about majesty, visibility and impressiveness, not numerical growth. The kingdom is more majestic than we can now see it or imagine it.

The third parable is about the leaven which is basically yeast that makes bread rise. Jesus says the kingdom of God is like leaven that infiltrates a large amount of dough. Many interpreters say the leaven is good here, spreading and growing while being unseen. However, given the biblical understanding of the kingdom of God is not about expanding or growing numerically; given that every instance that leaven is mentioned in scripture (over 50) it is with a negative connotation; given that Matthew will use it three times quoting Jesus regarding the "leaven of the Pharisees" (Matthew 16:6,11-12), the "leaven of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:6,11-12) and the "leaven of Herod (Mark 8:15) and given the teaching of the wheat and the tares (evil will live right alongside of good until Jesus returns), it is far more reasonable to understand leaven as the hidden presence and work of evil in the world that "puffs up" with arrogant pride in the presence of the kingdom of heaven.

The shocking news to the crowds was that indeed the kingdom of heaven is here but it is not here in the way that they had imagined it to be. It is not overthrowing Rome and re-establishing the political nation of Israel to its former glory like King David and King Solomon. It was not there to free them from being a vassal state of Rome and give them power as a nation over other nations. No, it has arrived in Jesus amidst the darkness and evil of this world, triumphing over sin and death in the most unthinkable and unimaginable way possible (the Jews had no idea the Messiah would be the Son of God, live a perfect life and would die as a little known servant of people and be resurrected and visible to a significant but relatively tiny number of people in the world and promise to come again to judge the living and the dead after he has sent the Holy Spirit to inhabit and unite his people to him and each other – mind blowing!! Jesus is saying you are only seeing the tip of the iceberg, the seed of the giant sequoia, the image in a mirror dimly but one day you will see it in all of its glory, magnificence, splendor and majesty!

The people had to unlearn their faulty understanding of the kingdom of heaven. How much unlearning do you and I need to do because we were listening to our culture or other people more than we are listening to God's revelation to us in his Word and through his Son Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit? Where are we like the younger brother and cheapen, lighten or make superficial God's Word by ignoring or disobeying or not believing it? Where have we become like the elder brother and over-legalize God's Word, narrowing it down to a particular doctrine or two, or maybe adding new laws and requirements in order to be a member and belong to the Christian community?

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus makes it clear that there is a time coming when all evil will be judged and removed from the world and the harvest of the good wheat will be left behind unharmed. There is a time coming when the disciples of Jesus will see and participate in the new heaven and the new earth that has been purified from all wickedness, cleansed from all evil and its effects; a time when all malevolence and maliciousness, darkness and dimness, disease and deceit will be removed, forever! We will see and taste and smell and hear and participate fully as image bearers of God without hindrance or obstacle or barrier or doubt or confusion or deception! We will see the kingdom in all its magnificent glory because we will see Jesus Christ in all of his glory. We will experience and contribute to perfect love,



perfect peace, perfect relationships, perfect joy and fully flourish in Christ. While today there is virus and violence, death and destruction, pandemic and protest, this is not how it will always be; this is not the final chapter; this is not our best life now, this is not our destiny. So, we live faithfully as disciples of Jesus, choosing love, choosing hope, choosing the ministry of reconciliation, choosing to be counter witnesses to injustice and unrighteousness as signs of the kingdom present today.

**Let's Pray: Heavenly Father, the world is often a very dark and dangerous place. Evil and wickedness are all around and within obscuring the magnificence of your kingdom. Yet, we believe your kingdom is present and we are part of it. We believe that you and your kingdom are for us, not against us. We believe that we are to live as witnesses to your kingdom verbally and visibly in what we say and do. Forgive our complacency, fear and doubt. May your Holy Spirit in us awaken us to action, to love and to faith. May your kingdom come and your will be done in this place as it is in heaven. Amen.**

### **Communion Meditation**

In one sense, communion is protest. The word "protest" originally meant to state or assert something positively (this is still its first definition). The clue of the word's meaning is in the "pro" portion, which means "for." Only recently in Western usage has the term taken on almost exclusively negative connotations. Communion is a dynamic, verbal and visible statement or assertion of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It attests to God's great love for us that he sent his only Son to save us and free us from sin and death. In the early church, when they gathered to partake of communion, they understood it as an act of rebellion against Caesar and the Roman State. In being for Jesus Christ as the only King and Lord, they were declaring their allegiance to him and not to Caesar. What difference might it make to understand protest first as being "for" something and second as it being "against" something instead of the other way around?

**Professing:** (Nicene Creed) – note the "for" tone of the creed, especially in the second section

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.**

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

**And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**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."



**Remember and believe the body and blood of Jesus was given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.**

May this song reflect the prayer of our united hearts as we seek to make Jesus of Nazareth known wherever we are as our lives sing Jesus' song of good news into our bad news world. Your grace has saved us so we pray your kingdom come...

**Song:** Let Your Kingdom Come -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rh8lOr9glA>

*Your glorious cause, O God, engages our hearts.  
May Jesus Christ be known, wherever we are.  
We ask not for ourselves, but for Your renown.  
Your grace has saved us so we pray your kingdom come.*

*Let Your kingdom come. Let Your will be done.  
So that everyone might know Your name.  
Let Your song be heard everywhere on earth,  
Till Your sovereign work on earth is done.  
Let Your kingdom come.*

*Give us Your strength, O God, and courage to speak.  
Perform Your wondrous deeds, through those who are weak.  
Lord use us as You want, whatever the test.  
By grace we'll preach Your gospel till our dying breath.*

*Let Your kingdom come. Let Your will be done.  
So that everyone might know Your name.  
Let Your song be heard everywhere on earth,  
Till Your sovereign work on earth is done.  
Let Your kingdom come.*

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

We gathered from various places (and at various places) to be the visible witness of the body of Christ, the Church. As we gathered, individuals became community. Individual families become one corporate family. We gathered to sing praises and lament together, pray together, read together, learn together, give together, engage communion together. And now we are sent back out, back to our homes, to our city, back to our places of work, school and play – our spheres of influence. We are sent out again as changed disciples of Jesus, nourished, equipped and empowered to live in such a way that we demonstrate Christ's love, grow faithfully in discipleship and share the hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

May the power and beauty and scope of these words imprint on us the nature of the kingdom of God on earth today. May God the Holy Spirit give us the strength and courage to speak graciously and perform his wondrous deeds of love through weak vessels like ourselves, trusting that the kingdom of God is here and that it will blow us away when it fully arrives in Jesus Christ when he comes again!

**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!**