

JESUS OF NAZARETH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
MATTHEW 27:32-54
11-15-20

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.

Reflect

If you are not humbled in the presence of Jesus, you do not know Him. You were so lost that nothing could save you but the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son. As Jesus stooped for you, bow in humility at His feet. A realization of Christ's amazing love has a greater tendency to humble us than even a consciousness of our own guilt. Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson. Then let us rise and carry it into practice. – Charles Spurgeon

Welcome

Good Morning and welcome to worship!

I don't know about you but I have noticed a significant increase in people's restlessness and emotional angst the past several months. Maybe yours as well. While this is not problematic in itself, it does create the perfect condition for bitterness and anxiety to take root and grow in our lives. The words from Hebrews 12:15 are appropriate for such a time as this.

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.

May we pull up any "root of bitterness" that may be growing in our hearts so that we might not "fail to obtain the grace of God" and be the one that "causes trouble." So, take a moment to be aware of where you are at physically, emotionally and spiritually right now. How full or empty are your tanks?

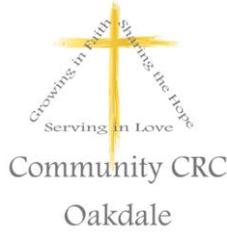
Let's begin our time apart together with prayer:

Heavenly Father, many of us are getting tired; some emotionally; some physically; some spiritually and some a combination of all three. Help us right now by your Spirit to turn to you with hearts and hands open to receive your grace... your authoritative healing grace... your quieting our restless souls grace... your refocusing on you grace... your nurturing and embracing grace... your renewing and restorative grace... your comforting grace... your worship worthy grace so that we might praise you and love you more deeply and fully today. In Jesus name, Amen!

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!

Call to Worship – Psalm 29 – OF DAVID

In the Psalms of joy, praise arises out of contexts of suffering and it does not ignore that suffering. It declares itself in hope, not in a denial of reality. This is why, as the Psalms see it, joy always makes space for sorrow. – W. David, O. Taylor



Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!

Song – For The Beauty Of The Earth -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIQxgEJhZDw>

*For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.*

*For the wonder of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light:
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.*

*For thyself, best gift divine,
To the world so freely given
For that great, great love of thine,
Peace on earth, and joy in heaven
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.*

Christ Candle – Egypt

Jesus of Nazareth said that to be a Christian means to be maltreated for his name's sake (Matthew 5:11) and the apostle Paul said that "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). Mistreatment as a disciple of Jesus is not a matter of *if* but a matter of *when* and a matter of *degree*. In America, the land of religious freedom, we have it pretty easy in that there is minimal outright persecution against Christians. May we make the most of our religious freedom to honor Christ and give credible and coherent witness to him! At the same time, may we be aware of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who don't share the same freedom that we do. The sixteenth place that is most challenging to be a disciple of Jesus is Egypt.

Of the 101 million people in Egypt, 16 million are Christian. In Egypt, many Christians encounter substantial roadblocks to living out their faith. There are violent attacks that make news headlines



around the world, but there are also quieter, more subtle forms of duress that burden Egyptian believers. Particularly in rural areas in northern Egypt, Christians have been chased from villages, and subject to mob violence and intense familial and community pressure. This is even more pronounced for Christians who convert from Islam.

Prayer Points: Pray for believers who have friends or family who have been injured or killed in violent attacks. Pray for healing hearts, minds and bodies. Pray for unity in the Egyptian church, that Christians of all backgrounds would see themselves as a common family of God. Pray that God would soften the hearts of extremists and government leaders, and Jesus' name would be known.

Jesus is the Light. We are a light. Shine His light!

Light the candle at this time.

Song – Living Hope -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w>

*How great the chasm that lay between us
How high the mountain I could not climb
In desperation, I turned to heaven
And spoke Your name into the night
Then through the darkness, Your loving-kindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul
The work is finished, the end is written
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

*Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven
The King of kings calls me His own
Beautiful Savior, I'm Yours forever
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

*Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

*Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

*Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me*



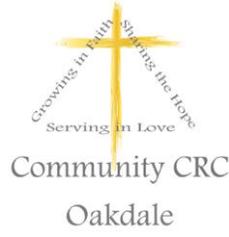
*Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me
Jesus, Yours is the victory, whoa!*

*Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

*Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

Song – How Deep The Father's Love For Us -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw01L-gfmN4>

*How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory
Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished
I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom*



Centering Prayer – Adapted from Genesis 39:6-12 by Colton Tatham

Father God we praise you for your absolute goodness, perfection, and holiness. We thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, who was tempted in every way as we are and yet did not sin. We confess that in our weakness, we have shamefully enjoyed sins of the mind and body that we ought to have resisted.

Please forgive us for our unholy failures. Teach us to truly mourn our offenses against you and lead us by the Holy Spirit into faithful repentance. We are grateful for the overwhelming grace that we continue to experience each day because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Thank you for giving us the power of the Holy Spirit to face future temptations. Continue to sanctify us in our frail bodies as we eagerly await the return of your glorified Son. In a world full of darkness, make us your holy lights and gospel witnesses this week. It is the name of Jesus Christ and for his sake that we pray, Amen.

Offering – Modesto Pregnancy Center

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 – Take some time to talk about and reflect on the importance of our youth. Then pray for one or two youths that come to mind. Pray that they might feel like they belong and can contribute in real ways to the flourishing of this church now and not just as “the next generation.”

Scripture Reading – Matthew 27:32-54

When continue with Matthew 27 and the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

Gospel Message – Christ Crucified

Jesus of Nazareth's name means, “he will save.” That is exactly what he is doing. In fact, he has been doing this from the moment he arrived in the incarnation (when God became flesh as Jesus of Nazareth within the womb of Mary). Jesus' whole life was focused on this one purpose. And now he was nearing the end of that great work. Last week we ended with Jesus being mocked, beat and ridiculed. Now, he is being taken to the cross to be crucified. Jesus of Nazareth – God in the flesh – Creator of the World – crucified! My intention is one – to let scripture tell the good news story of Jesus. This morning, like last week we will navigate both the inherent doctrinal/theological meaning(s) of this passage and let the story be told through the historical narrative of the passage – real history that changed the world and now is changing you and I. Matthew doesn't get into the theological doctrines of Jesus' crucifixion so we will turn to Paul to see inside the story of Jesus' death. Particularly, we will look at the central verse from 1 Corinthians 1:23 on the importance of his death and the centrality of it for preaching and teaching about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in all places and at all times. We will see that we are to never leave the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. It is not just for beginners or to evangelize but it is also for discipleship until our dying breath. It is as Tim Keller has said, not simply our A, B, C but our A to Z.

Criminals were required to carry their own cross to the place of execution. However, because Jesus was severely beaten, he was too weak to carry it himself so the soldiers forced a man by the name of Simon (from Cyrene) to carry it for him (this is an allusion to the mandate for disciples of Jesus to carry



their own cross, daily). They arrive at the location and offer him a mixed drink of wine with gall, a bitter herb. This was not an act of sympathy for Jesus but just another way to torture him to add to the very long list. There would not have been enough alcohol to do anything to numb the pain. The gall however, was terrible tasting and could of have even been poison. They were trying to make him even more miserable. Matthew skips the actual point of crucifixion and simply states that when he had been crucified, they divided his garments. Matthew, from the beginning of this gospel that was written primarily to Jews, was striving to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth was the one the Old Testament and prophets had prophesied about. Jesus was the long-awaited for Messiah! So, he shows more evidence of Jesus fulfilling prophecies and promises from Psalm 22 (dividing his garments). Matthew merely mentions in passing that two criminals were crucified next to him, one to the left and one to the right with Jesus in the middle. Then (and this is Matthew's emphasis here), he describes three groups of people who "deride" Jesus; that is, mock and tease and belittle and make fun of him: (1) those who passed by, (2) the chief priest, elders and scribes and (3) the two criminals. Jesus is surrounded by rejection, denial and misguided passion. He is surrounded by the very thing that he came to defeat – sin, evil, wickedness. Picture yourself in this scene – Jesus on the cross in agony being killed like a criminal with people all around him insulting and mocking him. This is your Savior, the one you love. It is a very hard scene to take in. It can't seem to get any darker. But it does....

The scene is horribly evil. Jesus has been on the cross for three hours at this point. He's in severe pain from the nails in his hands and feet and is struggling to breath as every breath intensifies the pain. The Savior of the world is dying. He body is failing under the torture. His nerves and muscles and organs are exceeding their capacities to function, pushing him to the brink of death. The people belittling him don't get it. They don't know what they are doing as Jesus says in another gospel. But creation does. Creation knows what is going on. Between 12:00 and 3:00, the middle of the day when the sun is at its brightest, it goes dark. Dark. The light of the world was being put out. Not the sun, but the Son. Slowly, suffocating, smothering darkness. This was no solar eclipse but a miraculous display of the dark and horrendous evil that was happening. It was a physical sign of a spiritual reality – sin is real and it darkens God's beautiful and good, indeed very good creation. Even more, it is a direct attack on God – God's goodness, his love, his provision, his grace, his mercy, his patience, his kindness. Enough to provoke his justice and wrath and white-hot anger at sin because of its destructive, ruining effect on creation and its belittling, unbelief towards creation's Creator. It's a dark day. Jesus, Son of God is facing and enduring the suffering and consequences of sin – death.

The darkness lasts for three hours. It's now around 3:00 in the afternoon. Jesus has been in excruciating (this word has at its core the word for "cross") suffering for six hours. Six, the number of incompleteness, of evil and of wickedness – fitting for what was taking place. He cries out in a loud voice quoting Psalm 22, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" Because the word for "My God" sounds like "Elijah" in Hebrew, they mishear him and think he is crying out for Elijah to come in save him. Once again, the people show their ignorance to who Jesus of Nazareth is as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Jesus needs no saving. We do. Jesus does not need to be rescued from the cross. We do. Jesus does need to be delivered from the cross. We do. Jesus is forsaken so that we would not be. Jesus of Nazareth takes the full force of God's white-hot anger towards sin and is crushed on the cross under its lethal weight. His human body cannot take any more and it shuts down. But not after one last



loud and agonizing cry out. He lets it all out. He has given his all. He yields his spirit. He dies. Yet, even in his last moments Matthew let's us know who this is. In using the phrase, "yielded his spirit" Matthew alludes to what John makes clear in John 10:18, namely Jesus saying that no one takes his life from him but "I lay it down on my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again." The authority of Jesus of Nazareth. Remember that we talked about his authority over sickness, over demons and over nature. Jesus has complete authority – even over his own death. His body is failing and he choses to "yield his spirit" under his own control and power. Sin can't kill him because he never has sinned (the wages of sin is death says Paul in Romans). Yes, he becomes sin who knew no sin but Jesus is still the Son of God. He yields his spirit; he gives himself to death. He dies.

Three things immediately happen when Jesus of Nazareth dies: (1) the temple curtain is torn (2) an earthquake that splits stones and (3) tombs being opened and dead people being raised to life. First, the torn curtain. In the temple, there was a large, thick curtain that separated the Holy of Holies (the most sacred and holiest part of the temple and where the ark of the covenant was) from the next closest space. Two things about this – it would take a miracle, or act of God to tear this due to its size and thickness. And, it was torn from top to bottom indicating that the separation between God and man is being taken down by God himself; from heaven to earth. Of course, this is God in Jesus Christ removing the barrier between us and God – that is sin – by condemning sin on the cross through his perfect life and sacrifice on our behalf – for us. God's plan of salvation from before the foundations of the world was nearly complete – sin is being defeated; a perfect righteous life has been lived; a satisfactory sacrifice is being offered; the wage of sin is being paid – death. Jesus Christ is leading us into the Holy of Holies! As the book of Hebrews says (Hebrew 4:16), we can boldly approach his throne (a good song proclaims this very thing too!) of grace and mercy to find help in a time of need. Second, the earth convulses at Jesus' death. It shudders. It shakes. It is physically affected. This is no small quake either – stone are spit in two! Some of these stones are probably the stones in front of the graves hewn into the sides of limestone walls. In fact, another earthquake will happen with Jesus' resurrection and the stone will be rolled away. Third, tombs are opened (again, probably by the earthquake). This scene is anticipating Jesus' own tomb opening. When he is raised, Matthew tells us that "many" bodies of the saints came out of their tombs too! Now, these are not zombies! They are like Lazarus who was raised by Jesus who is the resurrection and the life. And they go into Jerusalem and appear to many. Can you imagine! You can't fake this. You can't make this up and expect people to believe it without evidence. You could go to "many" people who were raised and the myriads of people who have seen them alive again. People verified this. It was true. If not, it would have easily been refuted and not believed from the very beginning. The soldiers knew this. They saw. And they responded appropriately, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Or more accurately, almost appropriately. They speak in past tense. In reality, Jesus of Nazareth IS the Son of God.

Yes, Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God who died and will be raised again. So what? So everything! The apostle Paul was transformed by encountering the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth. He understood the importance of the crucifixion and the fact that the Messiah, the Savior of the world is a crucified Messiah. He also knew that the truth of this reality would be problematic for all the non-elect, for all those who have not and would not be regenerated by the Holy Spirit to be able to receive by



faith the truths of the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. He says to the church in Corinth that he strived to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified and that this would be a “stumbling block for the Jews and folly to the gentiles.” The good news of Jesus is a stumbling block to some and folly to others. However, this did not cause Paul to deviate from nor soften the message of the cross. In fact, it solidified his resolve to preach Christ crucified because he is to us “wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption” so that we don’t boast and become prideful in ourselves but become humble and “boast in the Lord” because it is he who has accomplished our salvation – from our justification to our sanctification and to our eventual glorification when Jesus comes back again! Christ crucified leads to our exaltation of God. Christ crucified leads to our humble and gracious submission to him as Savior and Lord. Christ crucified assures us that in him our sins are forgiven and we are made clean, righteous and sons of God. Christ crucified means that God is fully committed to and involved with his creation, with us. So much so that he is willing to become one of us and die like one of us in order to be for us. Christ crucified means that my sin in real, and horrible and a heinous offense against a holy God that demands justice and satisfaction and payment and ransom and sacrifice and ultimately, the blood of Jesus of Nazareth. Christ crucified is the heartbeat of the gospel of Jesus Christ and grace and mercy its lifeblood. No Christ crucified means no gospel, no salvation, no peace, no forgiveness, no adoption, no inheritance, no new creation, no hope. Christ crucified means everything or it means nothing at all. There is no middle ground here. There is no balance or both/and. Jesus is a third way, the only way. The legalistic and licentious ways of elder and younger brother lostness are the dead end other two.

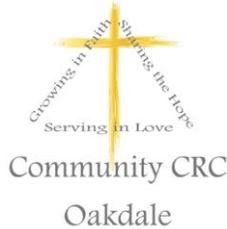
We need to preach and teach and hear and respond and live and declare the good news of Christ crucified continuously. It is central. It is essential. It is vital. It is necessary. Too many churches and pastors today rarely mention Jesus or the cross or the tomb or the resurrection. They are too busy scratching itching ears (2 Timothy 4) and being self-help gurus through their seven steps to a healthier marriage of five ways to be a better parent or 10 ways to bring more happiness to your life – all without the centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ or utilizing it as a means to a wrong end (their happiness and glory). I once listened to over a dozen messages from a pastor who is supposed to be preaching the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth and I never heard it once. Not once in three months! I was shocked and saddened. Friends, we are never to take the gospel of Jesus for granted or to treat it lightly. It is the power of God for salvation and salvation is not a past tense thing but a present and future tense happening too. Salvation is a lifestyle and a way or orientating our entire being in and around and through and by Jesus of Nazareth and his kingdom. It is a dying to our old self and living in the new; the new creations that we are in Christ Jesus. It is putting off the old self and putting on Christ to image him in what we say and do as Christians – little christ. And this is a weekly, nay a daily intentional act of faith that we do corporately together each Sunday and daily as his disciples.

Christ crucified. To some this is scandalous (stumbling block); an obstacle. It is something that keeps some people from fully embracing Jesus. How can my Savior suffer and die? I don’t need that kind of Savior. I’m a pretty good person thank you very much! I mean, look at so-and-so. Can you believe the way they talk! Can you believe what they did! Can you believe what they think about such-and such! Can you believe the way they dress! I would never be like that! I’m better than that. I’m a good person compared them. God must see that. He must know that I think better, act better and am a better



person. He has to owe me something. I mean come on, I have sacrificed so much of my time for church functions and activities and given much to the church over the years. Surely there is some payback with some good fortune in my life now. Surely there is a reward coming my way in my marriage or work or leisure. I've earned it. I deserve it. Come on God. How much do I have to do to get some good fortune coming my way now? Or, maybe it looks a bit more like this: look at all the good fortune I have. God must love me a lot. I mean, why else would he bless me with all these wonderful material things. And my gorgeous, perfect family. Surely these are clear signs that I am blessed. And of course, I deserve it. I'm a good (no, I'm a great) person. I've done so much good for the church and for my family and for my friends. My good works have earned God's good favor. And these things, these people, these successes prove it ----- My friends, this is the legalist; the lost elder brother. The one who has no need for a crucified Savior; a Savior that we are supposed to image and be like; to be humble, generous, self-giving; to be grateful and dependent on the saving work of Jesus of Nazareth on my behalf – even though I did not and do not and will not deserve it. In fact, I deserve condemnation, judgement, wrath and punishment, yes even eternal death for my sinful nature and my sins against Holy God. God deserves all my praise and boasting to be directed to him because he deserves it, he earned it and it is rightfully his, not mine.

Or, to some this is just plain silly, folly, foolishness, child's play, antiquated and a relic of the past, naïve simpleton beliefs rooted in dysfunctional psychological responses to childhood struggles. I don't need Jesus of Nazareth to save me. Seriously, that is so cute to think that there is a god that I am supposed to serve and give my life to. That's a bunch of made up hoopla by folks who like to control your thinking and get into your pocket books. Grow up! Religion is fairytale. At best to teach some morals about how to get along with each other but even that is foolishness. I mean, look at all the division amongst religions and how they have perpetrated mass violence and evil and injustices in the world, all in the name of God. Yeah, no thanks. I mean really, you want me to believe that God became one of us, but no one really noticed and then died a horrific death and somehow that makes everything okay and then does what is scientifically impossible, come back to life again. Don't you know how silly this is? My life is just fine the way it is without any of you religious folks telling me what I am to believe and do. So stop calling me a sinner and that I am going to hell (BTW – what kind of loving God would create a hell for people that he is supposed to love so that they can suffer for all eternity). You can't shame me or scare me into you false religion. Science is all that can be trusted. Science can be proven. It is verifiable. It is what is true. Not this blind faith mumbo-jumbo. So if you're going to be a fool and believe this fairytale junk, keep it to yourselves and leave me and others alone. We don't want to hear it. Keep it at home and on a leash thank you very much! Or, how can you say Jesus is the only way? That is so naïve. That is so exclusive and arrogant and judgmental! I mean, you are calling all those other religions false and their followers sinners going to hell. Wow! That's the epitome of stupid and conceited and egotistical! Those people are just as kind and friendly and generous as you (probably even more so than you!). Wake up! God love us all and each person will find their own path to him. The Hindu gods, the Muslim god, the New Age "god", the Jewish god, the Christian god, the pantheistic god are just different names for god, like petals on a flower or facets on a diamond. The main thing if for you to be you. So chill, lighten up, relax! Don't be so serious. Enjoy life a little. Let loose. Let go. Let others do the same. Let go of your small, narrow, silly "Only Jesus" views so that we can all coexist together in harmony and peace! We don't need Jesus of Nazareth. Exclusively. I mean, it's a nice but certainly odd



story – God becoming one of us and then killed by us in order to save us. Pretty wild thinking there. But heh, each their own! Just stop pushing your beliefs on the rest of us. There are many ways and if there are not many ways than there are no ways. This my friends, is the licentious lost younger brother who has to have things his way, when he wants and how he wants it – no matter how many rules, or doctrines, or principles, or laws, or statutes, or commandments it breaks. I'm going to do life my way, on my terms and according to my wishes, my wants and my desires. Jesus will fit my mold. I will shape him into someone I created who serves my selfish ways. It doesn't matter what the Bible says, I can't believe in a God that differs with what I think or feel is right. I will not bend my will to his. My kingdom come; my will be done on earth as it is in my own mind and feelings. Christ crucified – whatever!

Christ crucified. A stumbling block for some and folly to others. "But for those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:24-25). Do you see Christ as the power and the wisdom of God? Has the power of Jesus transformed your heart, your mind, your will and desires through the Holy Spirit to conform you more into the image and likeness of Jesus of Nazareth? Is this what you are fighting for – the good fight of faith in Jesus of Nazareth as The Way, The Truth and The Life? Is this what you are orientating your life around – Christ crucified? Is this the lens through which you discern and make wise decisions regarding putting off the old self and putting on Christ Jesus? Do you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness or is it second or third or worse? Is your heart and mind and hands open to receiving the good news of mercy and grace and love and forgiveness so that we might respond in Christ with the good works of faith (obedience of faith in Romans)? Christ crucified. Jesus saves. Jesus for us. Amen.

Communion Meditation

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."

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

Song – Doxology -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plCi6TccVNk>

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise him all creatures here below

Praise him above you heavenly hosts

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Amen Amen Amen

God we praise You

God we praise You

Praise God for all that he has done

Praise him for he has overcome

The grave is beaten love has won

Praise God our Savior, Christ the son

Amen Amen Amen

God we praise You

God we praise You

Amen Amen Amen

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God we praise You

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise him all creatures here below

Praise him above you heavenly hosts

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

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

As disciples of Jesus, we live centered on him crucified for us and central to what it means to be and live out our calling as his followers today. A significant part of that is teaching and learning "all that Jesus has commanded us." We often like to pick and choose what we want to believe about Jesus of Nazareth, leaving out or ignoring what we might consider his harder and more challenging commands that mean we have to change our thinking and our behaving to fall more in line with the truths of his glorious gospel. May we live Christ crucified lives by striving to serve and follow the biblical Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of Man, our Messiah and Savior and Lord.

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!