



Oakdale

**ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**ONE WAY**

**ACTS 4:1-22**

**03-07-21**

**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.

**Affirmation # 9**

Because **people shape culture**, we will teach, empower and equip all to be credible witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ and agents of his mission of making all things new. We will be proactive in how we engage culture, seeking not to be shaped by it but to be shapers of it.

**Welcome**

Good Morning! This is the day that the Lord has made and we will rejoice and be glad in it. Our great and glorious God is with us and for us today. As we humbly submit to him, let us remember that we are to be shaped by his Word, by his presence in us and by our faith and not the things of this world. It is in him that we find love and joy and grace and peace and courage and comfort. So, may these words ring true for you today.

**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 – Psalm 51** -- TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET WENT TO HIM, AFTER HE HAD GONE IN TO BATHSHEBA.

This Psalm is perfect for the season of Lent. David is a murderer and adulterer. He has killed Uriah and slept with his wife. He is a sinner. He wrote this Psalm after being confronted by the prophet Nathan with the wickedness of what he had done. Sin had dirtied his heart and it needed cleaning. This Psalm powerfully shows what a repentant, remorseful heart feels like and head thinks like. May this Psalm be a staple in our walk with Christ and his disciples today for like David, we too are sinners in need of God's heart cleaning mercy and presence and love.

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Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

**For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.**

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**



Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

**Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.**

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

**Song** – Good And Gracious King -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMPV7UABJm8>

*I approach the throne of glory  
Nothing in my hands I bring  
But the promise of acceptance  
From a good and gracious King*

*I will give to You my burden  
As You give to me Your strength  
Come and fill me with Your Spirit  
As I sing to You this praise*

*You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome, I lift my voice  
To the King in need of nothing  
Empty handed I rejoice*

*You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome with joy I sing  
By Your love I am accepted  
You're a good and gracious King*

*O what grace that You would see me  
As Your child and as Your friend  
Safe, secure in You forever  
I pour out my praise again*

*You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome, I lift my voice  
To the King in need of nothing  
Empty handed I rejoice*

*You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome with joy I sing  
By Your love I am accepted  
You're a good and gracious King*

*Holy, holy, Lord Almighty  
Good and gracious*



*Good and gracious  
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty  
Good and gracious King  
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty  
Good and gracious  
Good and gracious  
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty  
Good and gracious King  
You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome, I lift my voice  
To the King in need of nothing  
Empty handed I rejoice  
You deserve the greater glory  
Overcome with joy I sing  
By Your love I am accepted  
You're a good and gracious King  
You're a good and gracious King*

### **Christ Candle** – Tajikistan

We light the Christ candle as a visible sign of God’s presence with us; that he has come as light into a world of darkness. We light the Christ candle to remind ourselves that Jesus is the light and that in him we become light too. We are never a light on our own. The light we have and can offer to others is the light of Jesus of Nazareth. May we be God’s light in 2021.

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*. Hope is a vital aspect of being a disciple of Jesus. This is especially true under heavy persecution. 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 31st place that is most challenging to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is Tajikistan.**

Of the 9.3 million people who live in Tajikistan, only 70 thousand are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. In this central Asian country, no religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. Local authorities and police monitor religious meetings, detain believers, raid church meetings and confiscate religious materials. Here, Christians bear the brunt of persecution by the central government and from family, friends and community. Some converts are locked up by their families for long periods and beaten, and may eventually be expelled from their communities. As a result, converts are often secret believers.

Prayer Points: Pray with new believers who live under constant pressure to renounce their faith and return to Islam. Pray especially for new converts who are persecuted by their own families. Pray with church leaders who face threats of raids and arrests. Ask God to give them courage, wisdom, and



discernment as they serve the Church. Pray that government pressure would lessen and that Christians would be able to practice their faith openly in peace.

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

Light the Christ candle at this time

**Song** – Is He Worthy -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-c6pl6CaiD0>

*Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)*  
*Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)*  
*But do you know that all the dark won't stop the light from getting through? (We do)*  
*Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)*  
*Is all creation groaning? (It is)*  
*Is a new creation coming? (It is)*  
*Is the glory of the Lord to be the light within our midst? (It is)*  
*Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)*  
*Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?*  
*Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?*  
*The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave*  
*He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave*  
*Is He worthy? Is He worthy*  
*Of all blessing and honor and glory?*  
*Is He worthy of this?*  
*He is*  
*Does the Father truly love us? (He does)*  
*Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)*  
*And does Jesus, our Messiah, hold forever those He loves? (He does)*  
*Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)*  
*Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?*  
*Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?*  
*The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave*  
*He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave*  
*From every people and tribe (People and tribe)*  
*Every nation and tongue (Every nation and tongue)*  
*He has made us a kingdom and priests to God*  
*To reign with the Son*  
*Is He worthy? Is He worthy*  
*Of all blessing and honor and glory?*  
*Is He worthy? Is He worthy?*  
*Is He worthy of this?*  
*He is, He is*  
*Is He worthy? Is He worthy?*  
*He is, He is*



*He is worthy, He is worthy  
He is*

**Song** – Death Was Arrested -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMsMiluCUUI>

*Alone in my sorrow and dead in my sin  
Lost without hope with no place to begin  
Your love made a way to let mercy come in  
When death was arrested and my life began  
Ash was redeemed only beauty remains  
My orphan heart was given a name  
My mourning grew quiet my feet rose to dance  
When death was arrested and my life began*

*Oh, Your grace so free  
Washes over me  
You have made me new  
Now life begins with You  
It's your endless love  
Pouring down on us  
You have made us new  
Now life begins with You*

*Released from my chains I'm a prisoner no more  
My shame was a ransom He faithfully bore  
He cancelled my debt and He called me His friend  
When death was arrested and my life began*

*Oh, Your grace so free  
Washes over me  
You have made me new  
Now life begins with You  
It's your endless love  
Pouring down on us  
You have made us new  
Now life begins with You*

*Our Savior displayed on a criminal's cross  
Darkness rejoiced as though heaven had lost  
But then Jesus arose with our freedom in hand  
That's when death was arrested and my life began*

*Oh, Your grace so free  
Washes over me  
You have made me new  
Now life begins with You  
It's your endless love  
Pouring down on us*



*You have made us new  
Now life begins with You  
Oh, we're free, free  
Forever we're free  
Come join the song  
Of all the redeemed  
Yes, we're free free  
Forever amen  
When death was arrested and my life began  
Oh, we're free, free  
Forever we're free  
Come join the song  
Of all the redeemed  
Yes, we're free free  
Forever amen  
When death was arrested and my life began  
When death was arrested and my life began  
When death was arrested and my life began*

**Centering Prayer** – From: Every Moment Holy (Liturgy for a Time of Widespread Suffering)

**We are your people, who are called by you,**  
We need not be troubled or alarmed.

Indeed, O Lord, let us love now more fearlessly,  
remembering that you created us,  
and appointed us  
to live in these very places,  
in the midst of these unsettled times.

It is no surprise to you that we are here now,  
sharing in this turmoil along with the rest of  
our society, for you have called your children  
to live as salt and light among the nations,  
praying and laboring for the flourishing of the  
communities where we dwell, acting as agents of  
your forgiveness, salvation, healing, reconciliation,  
and hope, in the very midst of an often-troubled world.

And in these holy vocations  
you have not left us helpless, O Lord,  
because you have not left us at all.  
Your Spirit remains among us.

**Inhabit now your church, O Spirit of the Risen Christ.  
Unite and equip your people for the work before them.**  
Father, empower your children to live as your children.



In times of distress let us respond, not as those who would instinctively entrench for our own self-preservation, but rather as those who—in imitation of their Lord—would move in humble obedience toward the needs and hurts of their neighborhoods and communities.

You were not ashamed to share in our sufferings, Jesus.

**Let us now be willing to share in yours, serving as your visible witnesses in this broken world.**

Hear now these words, you children of God, and be greatly encouraged:

The Lord's throne in heaven is yet occupied, his rule is eternal, and his good purposes on earth will be forever accomplished. So we need never be swayed by the brief and passing panics of this age.

**You are the King of the Ages, O Christ, and history is held in your Father's hands.**

We, your people, know the good and glorious end of this story. Our heavenly hope is secure. In this time of widespread suffering then, let us rest afresh in the surpassing peace of that vision, that your whole church on earth might be liberated to love more generously and sacrificially.

**Now labor in and through us, O Lord, extending and multiplying the many expressions of your mercy.**

Amen.

#### **Offering** – Ripon Christian

Since 1928, Ripon Christian has been providing students with excellent academic training for a wide range of careers and higher educational levels, while at the same time offering opportunities and encouragement for significant spiritual growth. The heart of their mission is to prepare Christian leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century who will joyfully live out their faith in a sovereign God while humbly serving those around them as Jesus did.

**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.)

#### **Scripture Reading** – Acts 4:1-22

We are in chapter 4 of the New Testament book of Acts written by the physician, Luke as a follow-up volume to his first book entitled after him, Luke. We have already noted that the foundation Luke is building for the rest of what happens in narrative is based on the work of Jesus Christ as carried out by the Spirit-filled disciples of Jesus. These Spirit-filled disciples passionately proclaim the whole gospel of



Jesus of Nazareth and relate to one another as a unified community centered of Jesus Christ. No one lacks. They are devoted. Spirit-filled Peter and John have just healed a man who was crippled for over 40 years from birth. He is causing quite the scene at the temple leaping and praising God. A very large crowd is gathering around them to see what has happened. They are astonished. Peter quickly takes advantage of the opportunity to explain what happened and to keep them from making much of them. He tells them that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they killed and God raised from the dead, that Jesus was the one who healed the man and gave him “perfect health” and restoration. But not everyone is impressed with this message. Some, in fact, are quite opposed and hostile.

With this in mind, please read Acts 3:1-26 now.

### **Gospel Message** – One Way

Have you ever driven the wrong way down a one-way street? I have. It is an awkward and uncomfortable place to be in, let alone dangerous. The real possibility of a collision is high. People generally aren’t appreciative of you as evidenced by their angry and sometime bewildered stares and definitive hand gestures. After what seems like an eternity and endless apologetic “my bads” that they cannot hear, a side street appears and you are able to escape the fiasco. You take a deep breath and mentally note to never make that wrong turn again. Spirit-filled Peter makes several statements about Jesus the come across to the religious leaders as him driving the wrong way down a one-way street. And they are not happy about it. What is it that Peter says that gets them all upset? Simply put, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth did not fit their erroneous understanding of what the Messiah, the Savior would be like. And they were too hard-hearted, too selfish, too stubborn, too prideful, too power-hungry to listen or be reasoned with. They had the Jewish religious traffic flowing in one direction and Jesus of Nazareth comes at them from another direction – one that they did not expect nor want – a suffering servant that would not be a political king to rule the nation of Israel over their enemies like King David. Jesus of Nazareth was redirecting the flow of traffic, the flow of faith from law to grace, from good works to good news, from Moses and David and Abraham to him.

Today, Christianity comes across as people driving the wrong way down a one-way street. One of the major one-way streets Christianity confronts in pluralism. We live, by definition in a socially and religiously pluralistic country. Our national constitution is agnostic in that it is designed to favor no religion over another – all expressions of religion, as long as they adhere to the national constitution, are equally protected by the first amendment and the eyes of the law. There is no mention of God at all (this is not true of state constitution in which every state mentions God at least once – four even have bans of people who do not believe in God from holding office but this has not been enforced because it goes against the national constitution that prohibits religious testing). To have a plurality of people, of cultures, of religions is not a bad thing at all but is a good thing as a social principle. It provides the opportunity for a variety of beliefs to peacefully coexist with one another and to dialogue and to learn from one another. It is, at best a beautiful mosaic of God’s creatures from many different nations and tribes and tongues. The problem arises when one religion becomes favored and privileged over another. This, according to the US constitution is discriminatory. Yet, from the founding of this country and the US constitution, it is without question been decidedly favorable to Christianity. Christian cultural prerogative was conceded – until recently. While a host of factors play a part, the result is that Christianity is losing its privilege and status in America and being intentionally pushed farther and farther towards the margins.



This is not entirely a bad thing. The late Dallas Willard wrote on Pluralism back in 1992 as it was beginning to take a more forceful shaping influence in America, that Christianity does not require in any way social or religious privilege to flourish. The fact that the US constitution guarantees a freedom to believe and practice our Christianity is a good thing. But it necessarily means other faiths have equal opportunity to believe and practice their faiths as well. Willard is the ever-optimist. He goes on to say that when there is no presumption in favor of a particular religion, its beliefs and practices, (in this case Christianity), but perhaps a strong bias against it, they are in the very best position to show the true excellencies of the way of Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps he is right. But what does this have to do with our passage this morning? Well, Peter makes some outright exclusivist claims about Jesus of Nazareth that flies in the face of religious pluralism. What is religious pluralism? Simply put, it is the belief that all religions are equally valid and all lead in their own way to God. While a pluralistic society is not necessarily a bad place for Christianity to be (in fact, it could be a good place to be according to Willard), religious pluralism, especially when it has crept into Christianity is a bad thing because it is incompatible with biblical Christianity. While it was Jesus of Nazareth that got Peter and John into trouble with the religious authorities of their day, it is Peter's exclusive claims about Jesus of Nazareth that gets Christians into trouble with a growing number of people in our day. But before we go any further, let's re-address the text and remind ourselves what took place and what was said as the context for the application portion of our message today.

Jesus of Nazareth, through the Spirit-filled disciples of his – Peter and John – heals a man crippled from birth. People from the religious governing body, the Sanhedrin (priests, captain of the temple, Sadducees and Pharisees) break into their teaching and are “greatly annoyed.” Why? Because they were “teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” If you recall from a couple of months ago, the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead so what Jesus did as part of the Good News is offensive to them. But more importantly, Jesus of Nazareth was gaining a very significant and potentially dangerous group (at least in the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders) that could become a threat to them. Luke reports another 2,000 men were added that day bringing the total to 5,000 people in a very short span of time. If you add women and children, this is easily 15-20 thousand people!! The Sanhedrin feel threatened but because it was becoming late in the day they throw the two of them in jail to deal with them the next day.

The next day they ask by what power or name are they invoking to have the ability to miraculously heal this man. Peter replied, “Let it be known...by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...this man is standing *well* (Greek: *sozo* =healed/saved).” It's not us but Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the one you killed but God raised to life after life after death. That one. Furthermore, Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Cornerstone that you have rejected and apart from him, there is no salvation. Peter, for emphasis repeats this claim using other words, “there is no name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” In other words, they were, by faith and being Spirit-filled disciples upholding Jesus' own claim that he is “the way, the truth and the life” and that no one comes to the Father except through him. It was the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that offended the religious leaders then because he was a threat to their power and control. It is the words about Jesus being the one and only way for salvation that offends a growing number of people in America today because its exclusive claim threatens their thinly veiled, so-called inclusivity. More on this shortly.



The leaders are first of all shocked that these “uneducated” and “common” men were standing there going toe-to-to with the religious elite about the heart of religion – salvation. The uneducated and common guys were “schooling” the educated religious elite in religion 101! These unknown, Podunk farmers of fish were taking on the Ivy league elite and winning. They could not deny that this crippled man that they all knew from three decades of begging at the temple was no longer cripple but healed. So they plot to do the next best thing in their minds – threaten them. They bully them. They resort to one of the lowest forms of power and control – threats. Peter and John are not impressed nor threatened. It doesn’t work. **Spirit-filled disciples are not intimidated by threats to their physical health or freedoms in life.** The threats are like water rolling off a duck’s back. They respond by letting them have their power to decide and judge but that they would not stop speaking about Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It is better to listen to God than the authorities. Now, be careful here. This verse has been badly abused to justify just about anything a person or group dislikes about the government or other authority. Notice that Peter and John are not attacking the religious leaders but simply proclaiming Christ – they are responding, not initiating. They do not organize a group to storm Cesar’s palace or to protest his unchristian ways. They don’t get all heated up and spout unkind, mean and derogatory things at them. They don’t seek to undermine or subvert or attack anything about the Roman powers. They seek to proclaim the grace and truth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, do good deeds and be in koinia (Spirit-filled community with one another and which others not part of the community looked on with favor) with each other. Their “protest” was demonstrated through the way they lived as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ of Nazareth which was a way of doing good towards others and sharing the hope that they had in him because of his resurrection from the dead. And they did this with courage and clarity – Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the one way for salvation.

Pluralism, the not good form of it that holds the belief that most religions are basically the same and equally a valid path to “God” or a Supreme Being, hates that last statement as it confronts their main belief head on. The pluralist’s inclusiveness of all religions is exclusive of Christianity because it refuses to be pluralistic. Pluralism is thus self-defeating. And it doesn’t hold water. Not all religions are basically the same. They are different. They believe different things that contradict one another. Christianity is unique. It alone proclaims that God became man and conquered sin and death by his life and death and resurrection and that only in him, by grace and through faith can a person be saved. Pluralism tries to destroy the uniqueness of Christianity, of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and reduce him to another Buddha, or Mohammed, or Joseph Smith. Make no mistake, religious pluralism of this kind is decidedly dangerous and destructive of true Christianity. **We cannot and must not water down or dilute the pure and powerful gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth one bit.** We cannot and must not abandon the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the One Way for salvation. He alone saves. He alone is the King of Kings. He alone is our Sovereign Grace. He alone will judge the living and the dead. He alone conquered sin and death. Not Buddha. Not Cesar. Not Oprah. Not Mohammed. Not anybody else. If this is offensive to the pluralists – so be it. We are not here to appease everyone nor to get everyone to like us. We are here to be witnesses to Jesus Christ of Nazareth verbally in proclaiming the whole gospel of his kingdom and visibly by the good works of faith in community with one another and through loving others as Christ has loved us – even our enemies.

When I was in medicine, it was always quite frustrating to encounter the patient who would not listen to the prescription given for healing and health. Often times, there would be only one way to cure a



problem, one way to make them better, one way to overcome the physical malady. The cure was available but it had to be that one way. These patients would disregard that cure and try a bunch of other things. There had to be multiple ways to get better, so they believed – ways that are easier and less painful. Nope. Just this one way (at least in medicine for now – new ways may come). If you want to get better, you can be cured. But it must be done this way. The pluralists today are like those patients, refusing the one way and clinging to a false belief that there are many. And like many of those patients who do not get better and often die in the process (I was in cardiology so not treating certain problems was lethal), the path of pluralism, the wide path of pluralism is a path that leads to destruction. It is the narrow path, the One Way of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that leads to life and life abundantly.

We are to embrace a pluralist society. That is good. Every person absolutely has the right to believe and practice what they like in America as long as it abides by the US Constitution. While we are to love all people – Muslim, Mormon, atheist, Buddhist, Hinduist, gay, transgender, black, white, young, old, unborn, rich, poor, sick, healthy, pluralist, monotheist or anything else, we are to evaluate beliefs. And lovingly, graciously but confidently and courageously disagree when necessary. Remember, to disagree with someone does not mean that you do not love them, or cannot love them. In fact, disagreeing can be the highest form of love. When I disagree with my patients regarding treatment, I am loving them because I want them to get well. However, they have the right to choose the treatment and path they want to. I cannot force that. I can only offer it. It is the same with Christianity. We cannot force it. We can only offer it in love. With the exclusive claims of Christ in an “inclusive” society, we are driving the wrong way down a one-way street. But on this street, there are no side roads to get off on. We are committed to driving carefully but faithfully forward, knowing that collisions are not only possible, but likely with others. May we handle those truth collisions with grace and love and wisdom and patience and all the fruit of the Spirit so that they might see we are different because of the transformative power of the exclusive gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. (Again, exclusive in the sense that it excludes all way to salvation except the One way of Jesus Christ. It is entirely inclusive in that it is open to any and all people. The only people that are excluded are the ones that exclude themselves.) Peter and John were thrown into jail for this. So may we in the future. So be it. That does not change anything for us. Our message and witness are the same today as then. A pluralistic society is embraced but pluralism is to be rejected. Buddhism does not lead to salvation. Hinduism does not lead to salvation. Islam does not lead to salvation. And, watered down, pluralistic versions of Christianity that rejects the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the One and only way does not lead to salvation.

One last thing. The religious elite noticed not only that Peter and John were uneducated, common guys. They also noted that they had been “with Jesus.” To be a Christian is to be a “with Jesus” person. Are you a “with Jesus” person? How well do you know him? Or better, how well have you let him get to know you? The exclusive claims of Christianity include the promises that God is for us and with us in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. We are “with Jesus” people. May people know us because of our relationship with Jesus. May people know and come to our church because of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and not the preacher or praise team or programs. May many people hear us proclaim in winsome and wise ways the gospel of Jesus Christ and may they see us doing good works of faith so that the Father in heaven may be praised (Ephesians 2:10). If our country continues down the path of being more polarized and pluralistic, this will stand out more and more. As Dallas Willard said in the beginning, this



may be our best position to show the “true excellence of the [one] way of Jesus Christ.” May we be common, ordinary people living extraordinary lives of faith that expressed itself in love to God and others. To the One God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praise and honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **Communion Meditation**

The cross of Christ is unique. It symbolizes the One Way of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He saves us wholly. His substitutionary life and death on the cross saves us from our sins and his resurrection saves us from eternal death. We are saved by Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, according to the Bible alone and to the glory of God alone.

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** – King Of Kings -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of5IcFWiEpg>

*In the darkness, we were waiting without hope, without light  
'Til from Heaven You came running, there was mercy in Your eyes  
To fulfill the law and prophets to a virgin came the Word  
From a throne of endless glory to a cradle in the dirt  
Praise the Father, praise the Son  
Praise the Spirit, three in one  
God of glory, Majesty  
Praise forever to the King of Kings  
To reveal the kingdom coming  
And to reconcile the lost  
To redeem the whole creation,  
You did not despise the cross  
For even in Your suffering,  
You saw to the other side*



*Knowing this was our salvation,  
Jesus for our sake You died  
Praise the Father, praise the Son  
Praise the Spirit, three in one  
God of glory, Majesty  
Praise forever to the King of Kings  
And the morning that You rose  
All of Heaven held its breath  
'Til that stone was moved for good  
For the Lamb had conquered death  
And the dead rose from their tombs  
And the angels stood in awe  
For the souls of all who'd come  
To the Father are restored  
And the church of Christ was born  
Then the Spirit lit the flame  
Now this gospel truth of old  
Shall not kneel, shall not faint  
By His blood and in His name  
In His freedom I am free  
For the love of Jesus Christ  
Who has resurrected me, ohh  
Praise the Father, praise the Son  
Praise the Spirit, three in one  
God of glory, Majesty  
Praise forever to the King of Kings  
Praise forever to the King of Kings*

**Sending as Disciples of Jesus**

Indeed! Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the risen Christ is the King of Kings – the One and only. And this gospel truth of Jesus will not kneel nor faint. Not at the feet of pluralism nor any other feet other than the feet of Jesus Christ.

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**We are sent out by God into the world as his witnesses. As we go, may we know with our minds and believe with our hearts and confess with our mouths the gospel of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. And may we live in a manner worthy of that Good News at work, at home, at school and in our neighborhood to the glory of God and through the person and power of the Holy Spirit.**