



Do Not Follow Blind Oppressors

“Woe to you, blind guides” (Matt 23:16)

Call to Worship

Yours, O Lord,
is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the victory
and the majesty,
for all that is in the heavens
and in the earth is yours.

**Yours is the kingdom, O Lord,
and you are exalted
as head above all.**

(1 Chr 29:11)

Let us pray.

**Almighty God,
to you all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Praise Awaits You God in Zion (Psalm 65)

Praise awaits you God in Zion,
soon to you all flesh will come.
Though our sins prevail against us,
you atone for every one.
Blessed are those
you choose and welcome,
dwelling in your courts of grace.
We are filled with every blessing,
satisfied in you always.

From your river ever-flowing,
you give life to all the land.
Autumn rains and grain at harvest,
you provide for every man.
All the year is crowned with bounty,
deserts bloom and hills bear fruit.
Hills and valleys, all creation
lift their hymn of praise to you!

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Holy God and mighty Saviour,
hope of all the farthest seas.
When we pray you hear and answer,
you make known
your wondrous deeds.
By your strength
you formed the mountains,
stilled the roaring of the waves.
Earth rejoices at your goodness,
dawn and evening sing your praise.

Confession and Assurance

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt 22:37-40)

Have mercy on us, O God

**According to your unfailing love;
According to your great compassion.**

*“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* *1 Jn 1:8-10*

Therefore, let us confess our sins against God, and against our neighbour,
first in silence and then aloud together. *Please kneel or be seated.*

Prayer of Confession

**Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have wandered and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.
We have offended against your holy laws.
We have left undone those things that we ought to have done;
and we have done those things that we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.
But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us sinners.
Spare those who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent, according
to your promises declared to mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.
And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may live a disciplined, righteous and godly life,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." (1 Pet 2:24-25)

Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery

Come behold the wondrous mystery
in the dawning of the King.
He the theme of heaven's praises
robed in frail humanity.
In our longing, in our darkness
now the light of life has come.
Look to Christ, who condescended
took on flesh to ransom us.

Come behold the wondrous mystery
He the perfect Son of Man.
In His living, in His suffering
never trace nor stain of sin.
See the true and better Adam
come to save the hell-bound man.
Christ the great and sure fulfilment
of the law; in Him we stand.

Come behold the wondrous mystery
Christ the Lord upon the tree.
In the stead of ruined sinners
hangs the Lamb in victory.
See the price of our redemption;
see the Father's plan unfold.
Bringing many sons to glory
grace unmeasured, love untold.

Come behold the wondrous mystery;
slain by death the God of life.
But no grave could e'er restrain Him;
praise the Lord; He is alive!
What a foretaste of deliverance;
how unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected
as we will be when he comes.

God's Word

First Reading: Jer 23:23-29 p.651

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsive Psalm : Psalm 65

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.

O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come.

When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.

Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts!

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!

By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas;

the one who by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might;

who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples,

so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs. You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.

You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it;

the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it.

You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.

The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,

the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever, age after age. Amen

Second Reading: Mt 23:1-39

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: Do Not Follow Blind Oppressors (Mark Payne)

Creed (Heidelberg Catechism)

Believer, what is your only comfort in life and in death?

**That I, with body and soul,
both in life and in death,
am not my own,
but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ,
who with His precious blood
has fully satisfied for all my sins,
and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;
and so preserves me
that without the will of my Father in heaven
not a hair can fall from my head;
indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation.
Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit,
He also assures me of eternal life,
and makes me heartily willing and ready
from now on to live unto Him.**

Prayers of Intercession

After each petition:

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

The Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

All baptised Christians who trust in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to lead a new life by God's mercies, are welcome at this table. If you do not profess faith in Christ, simply allow the bread and wine to pass by, and reflect on what is taking place.

Behold the Lamb

Behold the Lamb
who bears our sins away,
Slain for us: and we remember.
The promise made that all
who come in faith
find forgiveness at the cross.

*So we share in this Bread of life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of peace
around the table of the King.*

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Torn for you: eat and remember.
The wounds that heal,
the death that brings us life,
paid the price to make us one.

*So we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice
as a sign of our bonds of love
around the table of the King.*

The blood that cleanses
every stain of sin,
shed for you: drink and remember.
He drained death's cup
that all may enter in
to receive the life of God.

*So we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of grace
around the table of the King.*

(Please rise)

And so, with thankfulness and faith
we rise to respond: and to remember.
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ
as His body here on earth.

*As we share in His suffering,
we proclaim: Christ will come again!
and we'll join in the feast of heaven
around the table of the King.*

*Stuart Townend, Keith & Kristyn Getty.
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The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Please join in saying the Sanctus ("The Holy", based on Isaiah 6:3)

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Father, as we have received these gifts of bread and wine, you have fed us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are members of his body. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son, and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gifts and Offerings

Gifts and offerings may be placed in the offertory box at the back of the hall. *"Honour the LORD with your wealth and with the first-fruits of all your produce." (Prov 3:9)*

Psalm 90b (Return, O Lord!)

Return, O Lord!

How long will you delay?

Have mercy on your servants,

Lord, we pray.

O satisfy us with your love always,

That we may sing,

rejoicing all our days.

In place of our affliction,

make us glad;

Give joy for all the

years you made us sad.

To all your servants

may your deeds be shown,

And to their children

make your glory known.

Now may the favour

of Almighty God

Abide on us—rich blessings of our Lord.

Establish every work

our hands have done;

Yes, Lord, for us establish

them each one.

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Benediction and Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the Name of Christ,
Amen.**

Sermon: Do Not Follow Blind Oppressors

Follow Christ, not the Oppressors (v. 1-12)

Consider Their Proud Hearts (v. 1-7)

Consider Yourselves (v. 8-12)

Eight Woe's of Judgment (v. 13-36)

Judgment 1: You Reject God's Kingdom

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| - Woe 1 (v. 13), <i>Closed kingdom</i> | Blessing 1 (Matt 5:3), <i>Open kingdom</i> |
| - Woe 2 (v. 14), <i>Exploited mournful</i> | Blessing 2 (Matt 5:4), <i>Comforted mournful</i> |
| - Woe 3 (v. 15), <i>Captive proselytes</i> | Blessing 3 (Matt 5:5), <i>Inheriting meek</i> |

Judgment 2: You Reject God's Law

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|--|---|
| - Woe 4 (v. 16-22), <i>Superficial oaths</i> | Blessing 4 (Matt 5:6), <i>Righteousness</i> |
| - Woe 5 (v. 23-24), <i>Scrupulous tithes</i> | Blessing 5 (Matt 5:7), <i>Mercy</i> |

Judgment 3: You Reject God's Salvation

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| - Woe 6 (v. 25-26), <i>Outwardly clean</i> | Blessing 6 (Matt 5:8), <i>Pure in heart</i> |
| - Woe 7 (v. 27-28), <i>Death</i> | Blessing 7 (Matt 5:9), <i>Sons</i> |

Judgment 4: You Reject God's Word

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| - Woe 8 (v. 29-35), <i>Persecute</i> | Blessing 8-9 (Matt 5:10-11), <i>Persecuted</i> |
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Jesus Laments and Leaves (23:37-24:2)