

**Trinitarian Congregational Church**  
**TakeOut**  
**February 20, 2022**

**Bells**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

“How Great Thou Art”  
Swedish folk melody, arr. by Jerry Ray.

**Call to Worship**

Marion and Bob Scott

One: Come near to one another and to our God.

Be still before the one who fulfills our hearts’ desires.

**All: This is a time of welcome and reconciliation.**

**This is the hour for quieting life’s stresses and worries.**

One: Wait patiently, for God will be revealed to us.

God is our refuge in whom we trust.

**All: We believe God is here and will be known by us.**

**Our faith nourishes us as we rest in God’s care.**

One: We are here to receive life in all its abundance.

God is providing for us and has a purpose for us.

**All: God raises us up and sends us forth.**

**Surely God will help us wherever we go.**

**\*Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful We Adore You

NCH 4

**\*Gathering Prayer**

Marion and Bob Scott

**Faithful God, your loving kindness brings light to our days and hope to our hearts. You have provided for us, preserved our lives and invited us once more into your grace. As we still our lives before you, we entrust ourselves to your empowering spirit. Let us hear your clear word of truth and embrace your call to loving actions towards all people. Lift us up above the limitations we impose on ourselves and others. Help us to embody lasting values in all our relationships and become a part of your transforming plans for our world. Amen.**

**Gloria Patri**

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

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

**Scripture**

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

Marion Scott

This is a pastoral psalm. It offers counsel about a perennial question. It has often been read as a doctrinaire moralism that believes evil is punished and good rewarded. However, a more accurate reading addresses the question of what the faithful community is to take as the decisive clue to the way life should be lived. Are we to live by the power of the wicked or the providence of God? It is not a sequence of abstract general statements; rather it offers nurture in a situation in which keeping faith is difficult.

<sup>1</sup> Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers,

<sup>2</sup> for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.

<sup>4</sup> Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

<sup>6</sup> He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

<sup>9</sup> For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

<sup>10</sup> Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.

<sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

<sup>39</sup> The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their refuge in the time of trouble.

<sup>40</sup> The LORD helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

Luke 6:27-36

Rosemary Dawson

This passage follows on Jesus' words of 'blessings and woes' from last week. Love of enemies is but one theme in this unit, but it is the dominant one. The reading contains two parts, the first lays down the general principle that Jesus' followers do not reciprocate, retaliate, or behave like those who would victimize them. They are to act according to kingdom principles. The second part applies this same principle to our relationships with those who do good to us. Kingdom living demands more than just being good to those who are good to you.

<sup>27</sup> "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not stop them from taking your shirt. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**Special Music**

"In the Garden"

by C. Austin Miles. Arr. Phillip Keveren

## Sermon

## Sermon

Say That Again?  
Luke 6 27-38

How many times have you had a conversation where you felt totally out of touch with what the person was saying? Many times that happens to me and Greg. Whether our minds wander, or things seem like a jumble of fragmented thoughts, we have learned to stop and simply ask “say that again.” Sometimes the words actually do make grammatical sense, but I simply cannot compute what in the world I am really being told. And I have to ask ‘say that again.’ Does that ever happen to you?

That is how I have been feeling about today’s gospel reading. The words are all there, but they make no sense. If ‘blessed are the poor’ had us befuddled then Jesus’ words today are truly bewildering.

“Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.  
Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you.

I hear these words of Jesus, and I find myself saying ‘that’s impossible, that’s not rational, and it certainly isn’t just’. I find myself trying to figure out a way to get around them, limit them or at least soften them. But Jesus will have none of it. I think he knows our human nature very well, how we try to hedge in, or shake off, God’s intent. So Jesus presses on and makes his point more stark.

“If you love only those who love you, big deal! Even sinners do that.

If you do good only to those who do good to you, what’s so great about that?  
Evil people do that, too.

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return”.

Wow, really? I don’t think I want to ask “say that again” because I am afraid of what would come next. I understand that Jesus is here speaking about life in the kingdom of God; but this is crazy! You couldn’t practice them in real life, could you? Jesus doesn’t really expect us to do these things...does he? Let’s take a poll. Is there anyone today who is ready to go out this week and do this for the rest of your life? Love your enemies? Bless those who curse you? Give to everyone who begs from you? Give the shirt off your back to the one who steals your coat (or anything else for that matter)? If someone slaps you across the face, give them the other cheek and let them have at it, too? Lend generously to people and don’t expect to get it back? Anyone? Right. And why? Because it is crazy. It’s perilous. It could get you hurt, cause you to suffer, in so many ways.

But right there is the paradox of this Scripture. Because what Jesus is asking us to do for others is nothing less than what God does and has always done for us God loves us, even when we run from him, even when we live as enemies of his cause. God loves us even when we’re fighting against him tooth and nail. God still loves us, pursues us, and in mercy redeems and restores us. God loves his enemies. That is the story of Christ, when all is said and done. That is the story of the cross and the resurrection- “that God so loved the world, me and you and everyone else, that he gave his son...” (John 3:16)

God loves us and cares for us, makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall, gives life and food and blessing to all, both the godly and the ungodly. Even when we curse God, we cannot stem the flow of God's love for us. God does good to those who hate him and blesses even those who curse him. God turns the other cheek to us over and over again. God gives and gives and gives, demanding nothing in return – because that is the love of God, for us.

That is the mystery and the key to the whole of Jesus' words to us today. This passage is not a do-it-yourself project. In fact, it really is not about us, it's about God! This is what God is like, and this is how God lives. And this is the way God has been at work in our lives since the time we were born! This is how God has chosen to transform our lives and our world into the Kingdom of God!

And the simple thing Jesus is asking us to do is the most reasonable thing of all. In Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount, it reads "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." In Luke's edition, that sentence is defined as, "Be merciful, just as your father is merciful." I like the paraphrase of Rev. Mark Singley, who simply says "Be to others, what God has been to you; do for others what God does for you." Perhaps we will never be perfect, in fact I know I will never be perfect. But by God's grace, with God's grace, in God's grace, I can choose to rely on God's love and strength, wisdom and power, to live as Christ - for others. And together we can, and will, bring forth the upside-down, right-side up, reign of God.

Shall I say that again? Amen.

**\*Hymn**

Help Us Accept Each Other

NCH 388

## **Joys and Concerns**

## **Prayers of the People**

Merciful God, we thank you and praise you for your boundless love that continually strives to reach us. We thank you for Jesus Christ whose redeeming work on the cross offers us true salvation. and we thank you for your Spirit, who strives to transform us into children of your Kingdom. And so we come to you now, O God, seeking the guidance and power we need to be true disciples of Christ.

We pray for your church and for this congregation. May the truth of your gospel and the life of your Kingdom be enacted here. May we live as a community of mercy, and grace, and share that kingdom life as we strive to serve the world. We pray for all those who are leaders among us. Grant them encouragement, wisdom and strength as they seek to bring true justice and peace among the nations. We pray as well for all who need your grace today. Grant your healing to the ill, your comfort to the sorrowful and your aid to the needy. We especially lift up... and we thank you for...

We praise you, Wondrous God, for all your mercy and grace toward us through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**Choral Response**

Remember Me

## Offering

The abundant grace of God has made our lives full. And it is now our privilege to offer mercy and help that can transform the lives of others. Let us dedicate our gifts with hope and joy.

Receive our joy, O God, along with our gifts. We reach out with this offering to do good in and through our church. Let us share with the whole world the blessings we receive from your hand. Amen.

## Doxology (choose the one that is best for your faith)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below,  
praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God for all that Love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen

## \*Hymn

O For a World

NCH 575

## \*Common Commission

**Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

## \*Benediction

Go now into the world

And may the Lord cause your love for one another and for all people grow more and more.  
In this way he will strengthen you, and you will be perfect and holy in the presence of our God.  
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, adapt

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

## Postlude

“Because He Lives”

by William J. Gaither and Gloria Gaither. Arr. by Phillip Keveren

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music provided by Chris Harris and Lynne Walker