

Praise & Testimony Service

- A. I want to welcome you again this morning
- B. And usually I say that at this point...
 - 1. Because it's not just us in the room anymore
 - 2. We have people joining us online (FB/website)
 - 3. And I'm appreciative of those that do
 - a. I mean, I'd love to have them here w/ us
 - b. I say often – love to put a face to the views
 - c. But I'm grateful that they're viewing it at all
 - d. I'm grateful they're receiving God's Word
- C. But today is a little different
 - 1. I won't be streaming the sermon online
 - 2. That's because not really a sermon today
 - 3. At least not one from me
 - a. Instead, today is a time to tell your stories
 - b. To tell of what God's been doing in your life
- D. And I think moments like this are important
 - 1. First, it's always good to hear other voices
 - 2. One of reasons we have ONU students come
 - 3. But it's also because your stories are powerful
 - a. Your story can change someone's life
 - b. God never intended them just for you
 - c. He intended for them to be told

- E. And I know for some of you – a little nerve racking
1. You don't like speaking in front of people
 2. You'd rather go skydiving than do this (crazy)
 3. And if that's you, I just want to encourage you
 - a. Don't let your fear
 - b. Stop you from sharing your faith
 - c. Especially here – we're all family

- F. Here's what I want you to remember as we share
1. We serve a great God
 2. I hope you've picked up on that theme today
 - a. Every song we sang
 - b. Talked about how great God is
 - c. The prelude video – how great God is
 - d. Our call to worship – how great God is

G. In fact, let me remind you of that Scripture

H. Psalm 150:1-2 & Psalm 145:1-2

Praise the Lord. Praise him in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

- I. Here's what struck me about that Scripture
 1. God is great...even when not feeling that great
 2. God is great...even when situations anything but
 - a. At all times
 - b. In every situation
 - c. God is great
- J. Let me give you my personal example
 1. 2018 didn't start out to well for me
 2. As most of you know
 - a. Just a few days into the New Year
 - b. I suffered from a heart attack
 - c. And not only that
 - d. But it was just days before my 40th birthday
 - e. Which again, most you know
 - f. Because silly balloon in rafters half the year
 - g. GO GET THE BALLOON TO SHOW THEM
 - h. And not only that
 - i. But in process of the heart attack
 - j. They discover that I'm a diabetic
- K. Now keep in mind – that's all within the first month
 1. That's enough to make you want to skip a year
 2. Forget about 2018
 - a. Let's just go straight to 2019
 - b. Surely, it can't get any worse than this

- L. But let's not get off topic
 - 1. My intent is not to tell you a sob story
 - 2. My intent is to tell you that God is great
 - a. He was great in car when I had heart attack
 - b. He was great while I laid in the hospital bed
 - c. He was great during my angiogram
 - d. He was great on my 40th birthday
 - e. He is great every time I take my metformin
 - f. At all times, in every situation
 - g. God is great
- M. You see, sometimes we allow
 - 1. The things happening to us
 - 2. Or the things happening within us
 - 3. To blind us to the greatness of God
 - a. But those things don't change who he is
 - b. God is great and greatly to be praised
- N. And sometimes it is evident
 - 1. We don't have to go looking for it
 - 2. It's not like a game of hide n' seek in dark room
 - a. No, sometimes God just slaps us in the face
 - b. With his goodness and his mercy
 - c. Sometimes we're showered w/ his blessings
 - d. Sometimes, no matter where we look
 - e. It's plain to see – God is a great God

- O. I know that's true of my life
 - 1. 2018 may have started off rocky
 - 2. But God still blessed me in so many ways
 - 3. And I know it's true of your lives as well
 - a. God has blessed so many of you
 - b. Awesome things have been happening
 - c. Those the stories can't keep to ourselves
 - d. Those are the stories
 - e. That can be a catalyst for change
- P. But even if you don't have a story to tell today
 - 1. I pray that you know
 - 2. God is great
 - a. At all times, in all situations
 - b. Whatever you're going through right now
 - c. God is great
 - d. I hope that stories today further convince
- Q. So let me pray for you
 - 1. And then the floor is yours
 - 2. It's your time to tell your stories
 - a. The only thing I ask as you tell them
 - b. Don't face me – face everyone else
 - c. I'll be able to hear it no matter what
 - d. I don't want anyone else to miss it
 - e. When finished – share in Communion

The Invitation

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbors, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The General Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against you, your holiness, and your love, and we deserve only your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us. Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please you in newness of life and to honor and praise your name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Collect

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who gave in love your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by his sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, we come now to your table in obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ, who in his holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of his precious death until he comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this cup, as he commanded and in the memory of his passion and death, may partake of his most blessed body and blood.

In the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In like manner, after supper he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of this, all of you, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you & for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Amen.

The Distribution of the Elements

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was broken for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon him in your heart, by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

The Benediction

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.