

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week Oct. 2, 2022

WELCOME:

PRAISE SONGS: Come now is the time to worship, There's a quiet understanding

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART -- Rita

SONG: Standing in the need of prayer

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Session meets Tuesday Oct 4

Five-week small group DVD study starts Oct 6 at Evangel Pentecostal , 7 p.m. Both congregation pastors will be leading this.

PRAYER:

SCRIPTURE – Colossians 2:5

For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong.

MESSAGE:

We're spending an extra week on this verse because there's a lot there. Last week, we talked about Paul's amazing heavy-duty faith, which didn't just inspire his fellow prisoners and jail guards. It worked across thousands of miles to distant churches he'd never visited. A significant factor in the church's growth of the day was the fact that they had the right beliefs and as Paul said, "living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong." Lifestyle and faith can take us a long way.

Lifestyle is important, but alone it's superficial. We can live good lives but if we're not plugged in to the Lord, then we're on our own. The illustration we used last week was that of a power cord. The lamp doesn't work unless it's plugged in. Similarly, we are spiritually dead unless we are plugged in to the Lord. We

connect via faith. The greater the faith, the more we can allow God's power to flow through us.

We also looked at what might happen if a critical number of believers in the church today were plugged in. What if our collective faith meter was turned up to 10 – or 11? Bill Graham observed 44 years ago during a trip to Canada that our nation has the foundation to become the world's spiritual leader. It was an amazing thing for an American to say – especially one who advised presidents and was considered "America's Pastor". I don't think he was puffing us up. He said this on TV and knew the world would be watching.

We have the faith foundation. And while church participation continues to decline, I see positive signs. Virtually all the growth in The Presbyterian Church in Canada is coming from congregations which continue to adhere to biblical beliefs and lifestyles and don't go along with progressive thinking. The large majority of the ethnic (non-Anglo) congregations are in this category. And we've experienced a lot of immigration from the global east and south in recent years.

I'm going to suggest that the biggest challenge of the church today is the unwillingness to be set apart. Paul told the church we are not "living as we should." If the enemy has control of the world and we refuse to give in, then the church should stand out as something different. It's the same situation today.

Rather than living as we should:

- We change our teaching and doctrine to be accommodating in the false belief that to be truly loving we need to accept choices of lifestyle and identity.
- We spend more time taking care of the building (which is easier) than the people (which can be messy). This is not to criticize those who are called to take care of the physical assets – because we need them – it's just that there's a deficit in the people department.
- We don't proclaim scripture and witness our faith in public ways because we don't want to look like Bible thumpers. Instead, we try to make up for it

through social justice. Both are important, but like the building and the people, there's an imbalance.

The result is that we blend in with the rest of our culture. Fifty years ago, there were 22 congregations or mission fields in the Presbytery of Essex Kent. Today, there are 10 and only six of them can support a minister. In the best case, we're treading water. A church that's growing in North America is rare. It doesn't have to be this way. Instead of throwing up our hands in frustration and despair – which is the easy way to deal with it – we are invited to stop, drop and pray.

I won't go on – because the last thing I want is to discourage you.

There is a way out. Let's think positive. Is it too much to think big when we worship a Big God? I mean, if nothing is impossible for God and all things are possible, why we don't we pray for something big? Let's pray for the Next Great **Awakening.**

Great awakenings in the church have happened at various times in the past 300 years. Britain and America mostly. It's fascinating reading if you ever want to search it out. There's plenty of material on the web. An awakening is more than just a local revival. It's a wave of Holy Spirit-fueled transformation when hundreds of thousands or millions of souls are washed and the church is rebirthed in a new way.

There are many church leaders who believe we are overdue for the Next Great Awakening. God has been preparing for this by allowing many corners of the church to decline for the last 50 years while seeing a revival in churches which are centred on the work and person of the Holy Spirit. I am among those pastors who believe that the groundwork for something powerful is happening.

Here's what each of us can do:

- Keep working to adopt a more Biblical lifestyle – because the alternative is to separate us from God.
- Submit to the holiness of God – adopt a Christ-centred mindfulness which is a complete childlike trust – because the alternative is dark and ugly.

- Pray like your life depends on it. That's not overstating it.

It's that final thing that's most important.

Throughout the past 2,000 years, every revival has started with prayer. One of the great evangelists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, R.A. Torrey, wrote in "How to Promote and Conduct a Successful Revival":

"Great revivals always begin in the hearts of a few men and women whom God arouses by his Spirit to believe in Him as a Living God, as a God who answers prayer, and upon whose heart He lays a burden from which no rest can be found except in importunate crying to God." Torrey, 10

Am I one of those men and women being called by The Spirit of God to pray? It's a question each believer can ask. And pray into. Am I that person?

If enough believers realize that what we're doing as a church in the West isn't working, if we press the pause button – don't close shop, just take a step back and take it in – and we submit to a genuine posture of prayer for however long it takes, there's great hope.

Revivals and awakenings begin with prayer. It might only be or a small handful of people. Witness the first revival, which was actually the start of the church. In Acts we're told that immediately after Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples "all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). The church was born and more than 3,000 people were saved.

Am I being called to God to pray for revival? Am I that person?

Ask ourselves a few questions:

1. Do you believe that God's hands are working in the world?
2. Has the Lord touched you? Has He spoken to you, provided strength, peace, hope. Has He healed you in any way? Has He done the same for friends and family?

3. At the same time, do you believe that there are many people who are spiritually lost or even dead and aren't heading to the Heavenly Kingdom?
4. Do you believe that while God has gifted us with brains and talent and we can do a lot to help ourselves and heal our bodies, we have no power to save our souls.
5. Do you believe that while the sun will eventually burn out and this planet will eventually pass away, the Kingdom of Heaven and the Word of the Lord will never die?
6. Do you believe that keeping the word of God alive and doing our part to save the lost is by far the most important thing we can do in this life?

I believe most of us here would answer "yes" to most of those questions, if not all. Even if you answered "yes" to just one, that's a start.

If you answered "yes" then you can ask God, "am I that person you are calling to pray?"

HYMN: 534 All who hunger gather gladly

While singing, someone goes back to get the kids – we'll do The Lord's supper as a family.

THE LORD'S SUPPER:

HYMN: 350 To God be the glory

NEW BOOK STUDY – starts next week -- Oct. 6

"You were made for this moment" – the new book by Max Lucado based on the Old Testament story of Esther. Every Thurs evening at 7 p.m. for five weeks starting Oct. 6. In partnership with Evangel Pentecostal. Co-lead by Pastors Andy Cornell and Rob Elka.

Queen Esther had to make some tough choices. She could have cowered in fear but she spoke up and God used her to save the nation. She changed the course of history. You may be staring down at a seemingly impossible situation. Deliverance will come. God will have his victory. He will rescue his people. The question is not, Will God prevail? The question is, Will you be part of the team?

If you want to be part of this, RSVP Pastor Andy at standrewspcdresden@gmail.com to let us know how many will be coming.

WHAT'S UP:

Oct. 4 – Session meets at 7 p.m. in Rutherford Hall

Pop can fundraiser – Bring your pop cans to church! Leave them in the bin behind Rutherford Hall. They're worth money!

Dresden Ministerial Celebration of Praise – Sunday Oct. 16 at 6:30 p.m. at Dresden Community Church.

GIVING:

E-transfer to pcvan1313@gmail.com. Leave envelope in the black locked box at the hall entrance, or if you have a key, leave your donation in the treasurer's mailbox

Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. N0P 1M0. Put it in the mailbox at the home of treasurer Paul Vandenberg. 1313 North Street, Dresden. Telephone number 519-683-6194

GIFT CARDS – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. Next deadline Oct. 30.