

## Sunday August 7, 2022

### Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

#### Welcome & Prayer

King David wrote in Psalm 145 about the Lord *"I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. <sup>2</sup>Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. <sup>3</sup>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. <sup>4</sup>One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. <sup>5</sup>They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty— and I will meditate on your wonderful works. <sup>6</sup>They tell of the power of your awesome works & I will proclaim your great deeds. <sup>7</sup>They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."*

Let us come worship the Lord this morning, let us pray...

Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways. For we have forgotten who is the boss. We have neglected to worship the one who rules the world and instead we have exalted ourselves, we have put others before you & we have failed to worship in thought word and deed this last week. Please forgive us. And place within us your Holy Spirit so that we want to put you in the pre-eminent spot in our lives. We want to worship you, serve you, love you and follow you in all that we do and say. Draw us closer to you this day through word and song. Help us to be committed more and more to your ways and to your thoughts and to your will. And then send us out to people the people of God in your place and your time so that all may see that you are our King and that you are worthy of all praise for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Song –Made Alive [Made Alive \[citizens\] - YouTube](#)

1. I once was dead in sin alone and hopeless  
A child of wrath I walked condemned in darkness  
But Your mercy brought new life and in Your love and kindness  
Raised me up with Christ and made me righteous

Chorus: You have bought me back with the riches of  
Your amazing grace and relentless love  
I'm made alive forever with You, life forever  
By Your grace I'm saved, by Your grace I'm saved

2. Lord, You are the light that broke the darkness  
You satisfy my soul when I am heartless  
If ever I forget my true identity  
Show me who I am and help me to believe

Chorus

Bridge: My sin has been erased, I'll never be the same  
My sin has been erased, I'll never be the same

Chorus

#### Bible Reading – Revelation 10:1-11 (NIV)

*Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. <sup>2</sup>He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup>and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven*

thunders spoke. <sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down." <sup>5</sup> Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. <sup>6</sup> And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay!" <sup>7</sup> But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." <sup>8</sup> Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." <sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.'" <sup>10</sup> I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. <sup>11</sup> Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

## Announcements

**COVID.** The outbreak of COVID within our Church community seems to have subsided in the last week. But we still want to be cautious and so this week we will again have no morning tea, we will open windows and doors to keep a good airflow and will provide masks if people feel more comfortable wearing them inside. And please be diligent in prayer for our brothers and sisters with COVID. For many their cases are mild, praise God. But others have found the going particularly tough and need God's help, strength and presence to make it through.

**Recharge conference,** A conference for men in the Hunter Valley. Saturday, 10th September, 2022. 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Location: Grace Evangelical Church, 344- 348 Lake Rd., Glendale. Speaker, Simon Manchester, John 14, 15 &16, for "on ocean of encouragement". Link for more details and to register: <https://www.hgm.org.au/recharge>. Any enquiries, Martin, 0421749751.

**Church BBQ | Sunday 14th August 12:00pm** We will be holding a BBQ in the church grounds. This will also be a great opportunity to get to know some of the new people who've started coming along to church in the past few months. BYO – BBQ meat and a salad to share. We'll start cooking the BBQ at the end of morning tea. Inquiries –Simon M 0404 942 544

**The Christian Health Professionals Network** would like to invite all healthcare workers and support staff (admin/ pastors) to their annual prayer brunch at Macquarie Life Church at 127 Macquarie Rd, Macquarie Hills on Saturday 3 September, 8-10am followed by morning tea. Contact Liz Trethewey on 0402 123 839 for details or register at [www.chpn.com.au](http://www.chpn.com.au).

**Working Bee.** The Church will be holding a working bee so it can do some of the general maintenance that builds up regularly. It will be held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 8-12noon. All welcome. Come for an hour, come for the morning. Plenty of big and small jobs to do.

**Days Off.** Please note that Jon's day off is Thursday and Stephen's is Saturday. Suzie work situation will be changing soon and she will be working for the Church on just Thursdays & Sundays. If it is an emergency, you can still contact our staff out of hours, but otherwise, please help them by only contacting them on their days of work.

**Focus for August – Commitment.** Our first commitment is to Christ. Before work, before family, before Church, before ourselves, God must come first. How are we going with that? How do we organize our lives so that we love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength? What does that look like for you each day? What does that look like for you each Lord's Day? In August we are encouraging each one of us to take a good, hard look at our lives and answer the question Jesus asked Simon Peter "Simon do you really love me?"

**Save the date:** Church camp. Fri 3 – Sun 5 March 2023

**Kids Spot:** As we continue to work through Luke, we will learn in Luke 4:1-13 that Jesus was tempted just like we are, but he never sinned. He is God's obedient Son. Question of the week: Why is it important that Jesus never sinned?

**Rhema (if room!)** Do you realise that our Church runs a radio programme on Rhema every Sunday morning from 7:30am? It costs us approximate \$60 a week to put the programme on Rhema and if you would like to financially support it please mark your offering Rhema.

## Prayer Points for 7<sup>th</sup> August 2022

**Psalm 25:4-5** “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.”

**Pray for the USA:** Pray for a move of the Holy Spirit that replaces national rebellion with widespread repentance. Pray for radical love for God and people to heal and unite a divided Church. Pray for godly men and women to take courageous and humble leadership. Pray for vast resources to be leveraged for God’s glory among all nations.

**Pray for the ministry of the gospel:** Pray for a profound dependence on the Lord. Help not to rely on wealth, education, standing in the world, but that we would boast in our weakness, so that the power of Christ would rest upon us (2 Cor. 12:9b). Pray for the spread of the gospel through us who are only jars of clay.

**Wee Waa Presbyterian.** Pray for this small rural Church that has really had a tough time with drought, floods and COVID. Pray as they encourage their people to be more regular in Church and deal with the challenges as a community of faith. Also pray that you will give them connections to the wider Wee Waa Community through camp fire tea in winter and games nights in summer. Pray for Steve Bignall who has been living way out of town while the manse was being repaired.

**“You shall not make idols in the form of anything in heaven or on earth”:** Lord, help us not to recast you in our image. Help us not to try and change you according to how we see fit. But rather we would be reformed by your Word and Spirit to be conformed to the likeness of your Son.

## Bible Reading – Revelation 11:1-19

**11** I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. **2** But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. **3** And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” **4** They are “the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.” **5** If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. **6** They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. **7** Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. **8** Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. **9** For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. **10** The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. **11** But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. **12** Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. **13** At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. **14** The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

**15** The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.” **16** And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, **17** saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. **18** The nations were angry, and

*your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”<sup>19</sup> Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.”*

## **Song – O Breathe of Life** [O Breath Of Life \(Acoustic Song Leading Video\) // Emu Music - YouTube](#)

1. O Breath of life, come sweeping through us,  
Revive Your church with life and power.  
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
And fit Your church to meet this hour.

Chorus: O Breath of love, come breathe within,  
Renewing thought and will and heart;  
Come, Love of Christ, afresh to win,  
Revive Your church in every part.

2. O Wind of God, come bend us, break us,  
Till humbly we confess our need;  
Then in Your tenderness remake us,  
Revive, restore, for this we plead.

Chorus

3. Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating  
While harvest fields are vast and ripe?  
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,  
Equip Your church to spread the light.

Chorus

## **Sermon – Talking the talk (Stephen T)**

Over the years I must have been involved in a thousand half time huddles. Whether as a coach or as a player you get absorbed in the action for the first half and then you get to stop and have a breather, in the old days you were given some oranges to chew upon and the coach would start talking to you. They would reflect on what has just happened. They would remind you of the game plan. The time for action has stopped and now the time to talk the talk has begun.

Slide 2

And that is what is happening in Revelation 10 & 11. We have just had four chapters chock a block full of action. Seals being opened, trumpets blasted, volcanoes, war, poverty, death has hit the whole world and people have been warned to repent because the last days are now here. And now we expect the seventh and last trumpet to sound and the final judgement to come when there is a lull, an interlude, a half time huddle.

God is giving the world one last chance. And how will he do that? He will send them his word. So we see in these two chapters the angel’s testimony, the prophet’s testimony, the Church’s testimony and the heavenly testimony all are made public. It’s as if there is one final, concerted push to turn the situation around. And that will challenge us today to think about our own testimony. Are we willing to not just walk

the walk but talk the talk? Will we see the drama going on all around us as our cue to speak the words of eternal life? Or will it make us go silent?

Slide 3

### 1. The angel's testimony (10:1-4)

*"Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. <sup>2</sup> He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup> and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. "*

Now this is one impressive angel, isn't it? For John uses language that makes us think about Jesus, even about God Himself. Robed in a cloud, rainbow above his head, face like the sun, roaring like a lion. This could be Jesus. But it is more likely someone who represents Jesus. Who like Jesus has authority over the land and the sea! Who has in his hand a message from Jesus!

Slide 4

So, what does Jesus have to say to the world through this angel? Well, nothing really. *"When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. <sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said & do not write it down."* You see God is not going to tell the world everything. God is not going to open up the curtain completely. God is not going to answer all of our questions, no not yet.

Sure, as the passage goes on, there will be a testimony about God that will go out to the whole world, but some things will remain secret. Sealed until the very last day.

Slide 5

It's a bit like the Freedom of Information Act. Sensitive documents, classified minutes, top secret dossiers are kept sealed away from the public. Locked away for a number of years before they are released. And when some of these are released, some sentences are blacked out, pages are still missing. There are some state secrets that will even then not see the light of day.

Slide 6

Now there is little point speculating as to what we are not being told. But as one commentator has put it *"John is being told to affirm God's sovereign control over the judgements proclaimed in the thunders and then is prohibited from revealing the contents to his readers. The major message is one of sovereignty. God is in control & the saints do not need to know all the details"*

This is the only sealed section in an otherwise unsealed book. The only thing not to be revealed in the book of Revelation. So, what he has revealed we need to be ready for & trust God even in the things we don't know about. Just as a blind man must trust, completely trust their guide dog to see what's ahead and what is around the corner, we need to completely trust our God.

Slide 7

### 2. The angel's testimony and then the prophet's testimony (10:5-13)

*<sup>5</sup> "Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. <sup>6</sup> And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! <sup>7</sup> But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants **the prophets.**"*

The mystery of God will be accomplished just as he announced to his servants **the prophets**. Now in the Bible a mystery is always something that was concealed in the past but is now revealed and made plain to everyone. It is not really a puzzle to figure out, a murder mystery to solve. It is God's revelation that is now been made clear. Actually, Paul uses the word mystery a number of times to talk about the gospel, the

coming of Jesus Christ. It once was a puzzle but now it is clear that God's way of saving his people is through his son the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle John, like the prophets before him are to testify about what God has done for this world and what God will soon do in this world. Now how is he to do that? It is not enough for him to see the message or know its contents he must receive it into his inner being.

Slide 8

*<sup>9</sup>“So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but ‘in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.’”<sup>10</sup> I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.”*

Slide 9

I wonder if you have ever had the experience of eating something that tastes sweet but ends up being sour? I used to have that experience when I was younger and would go to an all you can eat meal. You ate so much of your favourite foods that in the end you would feel sick. And that is the experience that the apostle John has and we often have with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You see the gospel is sweet good news, isn't it? Forgiveness for our sins. Walking with God. Heaven for all eternity is just the best news ever. Learning about God's grace, his mercy, his plans and purposes, his will and his ways changes everything, everything about our lives. But it has a flip side that leaves a sour taste in our lives. Not everyone will respond to God's grace. Hell is real and will be populated with people from around the world, including many that I know and love. And if I am going to warn these people to avoid hell, they will tell me to back out of their lives. And that could lead to abuse, a loss of relationships, suffering, even persecution.

Slide 10

Listen how the apostle Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 2, *“For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup>To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?”* And that is why some people seem to fall away. They only get told the good part, the sweet part about God's grace. And so, when their experience turns sour, they walk away from it all. Which is why we need to proclaim the whole gospel and believe in the whole gospel.

God does love you but Satan hates you. God saves but the world wants you to blend in with them. God does protect us but he also allows us to go through suffering and persecution so that our roots might grow even deeper in the faith of Jesus. For just as the prophets before John suffered for their message and Jesus suffered from his message so you and I will suffer for this sweet and sour gospel. But like them we need to keep testifying to the good news of Jesus to the end. Which is why the angel's testimony and the prophet's testimony leads thirdly to

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### **3. The Church's testimony (Revelation 11)**

Now this is where the book of Revelation gets even tougher. Because in chapter 11, the book of Revelation draws heavily on images taken from the OT Scriptures. John piles them up, sometimes even blending them together, so that this chapter is almost a compilation, a repurposing of a string of Scriptural metaphors. John, you see, is a Bible man. And if we read Revelation correctly, it will push us to be Bible men and women too.

So, the best guide to understanding the book of Revelation is not the newspapers or the latest Christian novel. The best guide to the book is the Bible itself. So, if we keep those principles in mind, even though we have come to a particularly complex section of the book, we ought not to be intimidated, but in fact, we will be deeply encouraged by all that God has for us.

So, let's proceed slowly. *"I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshippers. <sup>2</sup> But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months."* Ezekiel is told to measure the temple as well. And Daniel talks about the trouble coming on the world for 42 months. So, we will need to read these verses in the light of the OT.

Besides in 90AD when John received this revelation there was no physical temple as it had been destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. So, does that mean the temple will need to be rebuilt? Or is the temple being referred to here the Church, where each of us are living stones being built into a place of worship for our great God? It's not immediately obvious. But what is clear is that God's people, the worshippers in the Temple are being measured and protected and the Gentiles outside of God's people are going to be unprotected from what is to come?

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*<sup>3</sup> "And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." <sup>4</sup> They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth."* The two olive trees are found in Ezekiel where the governor and the high priest are set up as lights for the nations and will be powered by the oil of the Holy Spirit. And the two lampstands have already been explained in Revelations 2 & 3 as being the faithful Church shining out in the midst of a dark, dark world.

So, throughout the times of distress of Daniel, some 1260 days, 42 months, or 3.5 years representatives of the Church, maybe two individuals like Moses and Elijah or Joshua and Zerubbabel or John the Baptist and Jesus or maybe this might stand for the whole Church. But whoever they are will witness to the Lord. Will testify to Jesus. Powered by the Holy Spirit.

Slide 13

And that testimony will be powerful. *<sup>5</sup> "If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die."* Now isn't that what happened when Elijah was opposed by the prophets of Baal? *<sup>6</sup> "They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying;"* Now once again that also happened during Elijah's ministry. *"and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want."* That of course is a reference to the plagues that came on Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

You get what this is saying? God's people, his Church will have the power of the word of God as they testify to a world that doesn't want to hear the God's testimony. But God gives them his own protection. We saw a few weeks ago he seals them with the Holy Spirit. So that before the world ends, the word of God can go to all the nations. But that testimony is both sweet & sour.

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*<sup>7</sup> "Now when they have finished their testimony,"* (They will be immortal until the work God gives them to do is done!) *the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. <sup>8</sup> Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. <sup>10</sup> The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth."*

All seemed to be going well for the Church until Satan is unleashed from the Abyss. And then there is death and destruction. The Church dies a public death. There in the city of Sodom, the OT place of evil, Egypt, well that is not even a town it is a country that has always opposed God's plans and even in the city where they crucified our Lord, Jerusalem, the holy city, it will seem the Church has been killed off. And there will

be some sort of bizarre like anti Christmas Day going on where the world will give each other gifts in memory of the day the Church died.

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But it hasn't really died. <sup>11</sup> *"But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on."*

Just like Jesus died and rose to life on the third day, so the Church will experience a similar death and resurrection after a short period of time. Just like Ezekiel's valley of the dry bones, so the Holy Spirit will breathe life back into the dead corpse of the church. And we have seen that happen again and again and again throughout history. Places like Ephesus and Jerusalem once thriving Church communities have been decimated. But will come to life again before the end.

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In the middle of the last century China kicked out all foreign missionaries, tried and executed pastors & Christians. And in an announcement sent around the world from the city of Shanghai Madam Mao announced that in this city Christianity was dead. And yet the latest count is that in Shanghai there are at least a million believers today. That has also happened in communist Russia and in one of the fastest growing churches in the world is in Iran where the persecution has been horrendous. In all these places the church looked dead but came alive again.

So don't worry if the church looks like it is dead in Europe or dying in England, America or Australia. It is thriving in Africa, in South America and parts of Asia. The witness seems to be dead but God can raise it up, like he raised Jesus up. It is built on the rock and the gates of hell will never completely destroy it.

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So, when it is under stress, under persecution, under duress, remember that in the end judgement will come. But the ones who will get the short straw are not those who are testifying to their faith but those who are opposing to the faith. <sup>13</sup> *"At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. <sup>14</sup> The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon."*

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Friends in the last days the testimony to the good news needs to continue to go out from the Church. From you and I. it may look like we are struggling. It might seem we are dying but we have the words of eternal life. And before the end comes, the gospel needs to go out. So don't put your head down. Don't be afraid. Be bold. You are immortal until the work God has for you to do is done.

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#### **4. Heaven's Testimony (11:15-19)**

So in the midst of a difficult world, do what John did next. He looked up. And saw a glimpse of what is going on in heaven. <sup>15</sup> *"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

He will reign for ever and ever. That is the wonderful refrain of Handel's Messiah. These are the words that come smack bang in the middle of the book Revelation. And they are the theme that keeps being repeated in all of its pages. No matter how difficult are the circumstances, our God reigns. According to v 17 Christ reigns supreme. According to v 18 he judges righteously. And according to v 18 he rewards graciously. Our God truly reigns.

The nations might be angry. The trumpets might be sounding forth. The Satan might be let loose. The Church might be dying but our God reigns. And before the end he is sending out his testimony to all the

world. Through angels, prophets, the Church and even heaven itself. Repent and believe in the sweet and sour Jesus. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Live for him. And don't just walk the walk, talk the talk as well. Which leads finally to

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### 5. Our Testimony.

For one of the last things that Jesus told his followers to do before he went to heaven was to take part in the great commission. *"Then Jesus came to them & said, "All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Yes, there will be a cost if we do that. Yes, the world will not appreciate our witness. But whom do you please your family or your heavenly father? Your sisters or your Saviour? Your heroes or your holy spirit? Our passage is telling us today that in the midst of all the actions going on all around us, in the midst of COVID and poverty and war and death and sickness and persecution the word needs to go out. For it the power of God to save all people. All people. So how will they hear unless the message goes out. And how will the message go out unless we are engaged in the mission of God. You & I need to be bringing people to himself through the word.

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But Paul warned Timothy: *"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).* And what was applied firstly to Timothy also applies to us today.

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In a post just a couple of weeks ago Sydney Baptist Pastor Karl Faase put it this way. *"In the first 300 years of the existence of the Christian faith, the message of the gospel was completely at odds with the values of the Greco Roman world. It annoyed all the cultural elites & experienced both sneering disrespect and physical opposition. The church grew, not because it fitted the culture but because it was true. Lives were changed and the church grew in numbers and eventually influence.*

*We are in a society where the values of Christian faith will clash with the values of our communities' elites who dictate what's acceptable. This is no reason to change what we teach or believe to suite the current culture. That did not work in the first century and it won't work in the twenty first century. As St Paul wrote to the church in Rome in that first century - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"*

Now is not just the time to walk the walk but to talk the talk. Now is the time for our testimony.

## Song – Servants of the Gospel [Servants Of The Gospel \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

1: Though we were undeserving  
 Christ died to wash us clean  
 He bore the Father's anger  
 While nailed upon the tree  
 In darkness and in turmoil  
 The judgment fell on Him  
 Bringing us forgiveness  
 That new life might begin

*Chorus:* As servants of the gospel  
Christ's work we carry on  
That through our prayer and witness  
By grace we might win some  
We call on every nation  
To turn to Christ the Lord  
Refuge in His mercy  
And marvel at His love

2: The grave could not contain Him  
From death the Son broke free  
Exalted by His Father  
To rule eternally  
And in His grace He calls us  
To be His chosen church  
As His holy temple  
His priests to all the earth

3: Marked with His Holy Spirit  
And guided by His word  
Christ gathers us together  
Prepares us for good works  
And so with grace apportioned  
We serve each other's needs  
Sharing in each blessing  
And helping in our grief

## **Benediction**

*"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever." ... "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.*