

Sunday 27th September, 2026

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

As we begin our service of worship this morning let's remind ourselves of the great God we are coming before. So I am going to start off with a reading from Psalm 46. *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."* (NIV)

Prayer God our Refuge, when human resources fail, you alone remain our sure hope and defense. In the knowledge of your love, grant us courage. We place ourselves in your hands, confident that nothing can separate us from your love. We praise you for Jesus, the Living One, the First and the Last, who was dead, but now is forever alive. Help us, who have not seen, to believe; send us, as you have sent Jesus, to greet the world with the Easter word of peace and to share with all the Spirit's new life of forgiveness. We ask through the Lord Jesus, our Passover and our Peace, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Song – King of Kings <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSnGYGr7sPg>

1. In the darkness we were waiting
Without hope, without light
'Til from Heaven You came
running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt

Chorus:

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings

1. To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise
the cross
For even in your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our
sake you died

Chorus

1. And the morning that You rose
All of Heaven held its breath
Til that stone was moved for good
For the
Lamb had conquered death
And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls
of all who'd come
To the Father are restored
1. And the church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel,
shall not faint
By His blood and in His name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has
resurrected me

Chorus

Bible Reading –Luke 10:25-37(NIV)

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" **26** "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" **27** He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'[c]; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'[d]" **28** "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." **29** But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. **31** A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. **32** So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. **34** He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** The next day he took out two denarii[e] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' **36** "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" **37** The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Announcements

Focus for the month: Growth. I read this week these words from American preacher Kent Hughes "To be a Christian means to give as much of myself as I can to as much of Jesus Christ as I know. This why as we grow in the knowledge of his mercy we should be more committed at age 21 than 16 and more so at 35, 45, 60 and 70!" Could that be said of you and me? That we are growing in our faith, growing in our commitment to Christ? If so praise God. If not, its time we speak to the Lord about that!

School Holidays. NSW schools have now finished their term 3 and are off for two weeks well deserved holidays. Next weekend all our regular activities will also go into recess to give our faithful Creche, kids Church, SPARKLERS, IMPACT, Bible Study leaders a good break as well. From TODAY our kids will stay in the services but there will be kids packs for all those in primary school if required.

Annual Leave. Both Stephen and Audric will be away on holiday this coming week. Audric will be back on Monday 5th October and Stephen back on deck on Thursday the 7th October. If you need any pastoral assistance please speak to Mal (Swansea), Ross or Steve Gillard (Charlestown AM) and Luke Wigney (Sunday @ 6)

Church Administrator. Many thanks to those who showed an interest and/or applied for the position. Unfortunately, we weren't able to fill the position. We might try again towards the end of the year. That means that things might be a bit clunky for a while! The bulk of that administration will go back to Stephen but he is committed to responding in a timely manner. But please note that he will be away until this next Thursday. Please keep sending your questions and requests to the admin@cpres.org email – what you have to say is extremely important to us.

New Rosters. Should be out this week (thanks Sam for making sure they were done until the end of the year). We are always on the lookout for people to help with cleaning, drumming, sound, computer, kids talks and many other tasks. If you would be happy to fill a gap in one of these places, just let Stephen know.

Operation Christmas Child. It's time to collect your boxes and have fun filling them. occ.samaritanspurse.org.au has ideas and some inspiring short videos. Or you might like to have a box filled on your behalf for \$25. Visit charlestownpresbyterian.square.site to make your payment. Enquiries to Kathryn O'Callaghan or Grace Baker. Please have filled boxes returned by Sunday 18th October

HSC Supper | Wednesday 7th October 7:30pm Quick word for anyone finishing their HSC or turning 18 this year. That stretch of life can be exciting, but it can also feel like you're standing at the edge of something with no idea what's next. We don't want you walking into that alone. So we're putting on a supper where we can pray with you, hear what you're thinking for next year, and talk about what it could look like to be mentored as a young adult here at Charlestown. It's happening down at Yochi in Charlestown Square. If that's you, or you know someone it's for, come along and bring a friend. Chat to Audric or Jannah if interested.

Financial Update

Budget offerings for August \$40,833

Actual Offerings for August \$38,804

Deficit for August \$2,029

Deficit for January to August \$25,116

Big Topics. We are hoping to provide a chance to get together and discuss some big topics. These will not be seminars but round table discussions where those who are interested will read (or watch) something in preparation, before meeting up to pool ideas. The first of these topics will be AI and Us and will be held at the Charlestown Church from 11:45-12:45 on Sunday 25th October. All welcome.

Song – Who is on the Lords side [Who is on the Lord's side \(BY St Michael's Singers\)](#) [\(gospel hymn\) - YouTube](#)

1. Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King? Who will be His helpers, other lives to bring? Who will leave the world's side? Who will face the foe? Who is on the Lord's side? Who for Him will go? By Thy call of mercy, by Thy grace divine, We are on the Lord's side—Savior, we are Thine!
2. Jesus, Thou hast bought us, not with gold or gem, But with Thine own lifeblood, for Thy diadem; With Thy blessing filling each who comes to Thee, Thou hast made us willing, Thou hast made us free. By Thy grand redemption, by Thy grace divine, We are on the Lord's side—Savior, we are Thine!
3. Fierce may be the conflict, strong may be the foe, But the King's own army none can overthrow; 'Round His standard ranging, vict'ry is secure, For His truth unchanging makes the triumph sure. Joyfully enlisting, by Thy grace divine, We are on the Lord's side—Savior, we are Thine!
4. Chosen to be soldiers, in an alien land, Chosen, called, and faithful, for our Captain's band; In the service royal, let us not grow cold, Let us be right loyal, noble, true and bold. Master, wilt Thou keep us, by Thy grace divine, Always on the Lord's side—Savior, always Thine!

Pastoral Prayer Points

Pray for Tunisia (Population 13 million. Christians 23,000). Almost all Christians come from a Muslim background and make up a tiny minority. As protests continue against one-party rule, pray that God would bring about freedom for His people to practise their faith. Converts from Islam can face substantial persecution. Ask God to protect these believers.

Pray that Tunisian Christians will find opportunities for fellowship, encouragement & growth

Pray for Webbs (CMS, Broome). Pray for the 5 to 7 blokes who meet with Chris each Monday to read the Bible – especially those with lower literary skills. Pray for 3 to 6 women who meet with Karen to discuss the gospel of Luke. Pray for Chris as he goes each Wednesday to the MilliYaRumurra Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre and reads the Bible with those who are interested there. And pray for the around 20 people who meet each Sunday after at People's Church to worship the Lord.

Pray for the upcoming school holidays. Pray that God would graciously watch over our children and young people during the upcoming school holidays, keeping them safe and providing opportunities for rest, refreshment and joyful fellowship with family and friends. Pray that parents would use this time wisely to nurture their children in the knowledge and love of the Lord, making the most of opportunities to read God's Word, pray and speak about Jesus together.

Thank the Lord for the faithfulness of all our volunteers – whether teaching Kids Church, running IMPACT or SPARKLERS, leading home groups, running events being a member of the session, committee of Management

or the deacons court. Pray that they might have a time of rest and relaxation over the school break and be ready to serve again in term 4.

Bible Reading – Luke 10:38-42 (NIV)

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one.[f] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Sermon:Costly Love(Paul B)

In Luke 10 we find the familiar story of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, it is so well-known that NSW Civil Liability Act in NSW that defines a Good Samaritan as someone who acts "in good faith and without expectation of payment or other reward".

The **context of this parable** in Luke and Jesus' ministry is important for understanding it. In Luke 9 Jesus has set out Jerusalem for one last time; he is journeying to face his coming death and in chapter 10 verse 1 he sends out the 72 disciples to spread his message in the villages he is about to pass through. The 72 have returned, and they've reported that things have gone well, Jesus' message and power have been received well. So, the **Jesus movement is spreading amongst the people**, but not everyone is happy as the religious leaders don't like it. So, now they want to do something about it.

1) Right Answer, Wrong Heart

ESV - 25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" In a church with our traditions and theology, we have a natural unease with this kind of question. **We think this man must be trying to earn salvation**, and we load up all our Protestantism teachings in the barrel. He just needs to realise this is the wrong question, that our good works are just filthy rags, and we need to open to Romans or Galatians and really go hard on the Faith Alone stuff. However, this is not the question of a man trying to earn his salvation, as it was actually quite a common question for Rabbi's to discuss in the 1st century. For example, **Rabbi Eliezer** (c. 90 A.D.) is asked a similar question, as are Peter and Paul in the book of Acts. Even Jesus is asked it again by the Rich Young Ruler later in Luke. So, this is a question on Jesus' understanding of salvation. And to be clear, the lawyer is not worried about his own salvation or is just wanting to find some common ground with his theology and Jesus'.

This man is not a genuine seeker because he **sees Jesus as a threat** to his religious life and status in society. So, it's better to get Jesus say something stupid so we can undermine him. **26 He [Jesus] said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."**

This guy gives the perfect answer. He **gives the same answer Jesus would give and does give**. The lawyer can cite the Bible correctly, he knows his theology well, but he has no interest in the implication of this law for his life and salvation. Jesus himself warns about this in Matthew 23:2 **"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach."**

This man is a warning about not being too impressed with someone who can give all the right answers but with the wrong heart. Don't get me wrong - Christian faith requires deep thinking; it is an incredibly deep faith. But if that deep thinking and study is not matched by an equally deep application and sincerity of heart, then we are no different from this expert in the law.

2) Love Without Limits

28 And he [Jesus] said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Rather than acknowledge how he has fallen short of the command and the need for God's grace, the lawyer would rather deflect and ask a question. Why does this lawyer ask this question here? I think it's because the lawyer wants to know the **limits of the commandment of love**. If love is the greatest commandment, if it's the evidence of inheritance of eternal life in your own life, then surely there are limits. He is looking to "justify himself" in the sense of justifying his lack of love towards certain people. **The question reveals the heart of this man**. In reality he is asking "who do I not have to show love to?" I dare say for this man, those who aren't his neighbour would be the non-religious or pagan Romans, the prostitute, the political leader, the Samaritan etc... are not included. They have placed themselves outside of God's love and grace, so they are outside my love. You find this sentiment in Jewish literature from this period (obviously, this isn't reflective of everyone).

For example, in the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach (Ben Sira) written in the 2nd century B.C., the author writes **"Give to the devout, but do not help the sinner. Do good to the humble, but do not give to the ungodly...For the Most High also hates sinners...Give to the one who is good, but do not help the sinner."** Hasn't God himself placed limits on who he loves? So, shouldn't we also limit those whom we love?

It would have been easy for Jesus to rebuke him or dismiss him, but instead he tells a parable. Jesus' parables always seek to reveal your true heart, not the religiosity we may pose with.

30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."

Why don't the priest or Levite stop to help? It is common to hear people say that they didn't want to become ritually unclean – that they wouldn't be able to serve in the temple or synagogue because helping would have made them unclean. Then others argue back that because they are walking away from Jerusalem, they can't be concerned about that. However, I think that misses the point. Priests were required to help those in need. For example, Leviticus 19:34 all Israelites are called to **"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."**

The point is the priest and the Levite have no reason not to show compassion and help this man. Jesus is making the point that they don't want to show compassion. Jesus makes this claim about the lawyers in Luke 11:45.

"One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also." 46 Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them." Compassion is not a characteristic of this religious group.

33 But a Samaritan - To give an idea of the **relationship between Jews and Samaritans**, Rabbi Eliezer in the Mishnah (around 200 A.D.) stated that: 'He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one that eats the flesh of swine'. He is saying that accepting the hospitality of a Samaritan is the most unclean, disgusting thing you can do as a religious Jew. The Jews also destroyed the Samaritan temple in 110 B.C. Even Jesus is accused of being a demon-possessed Samaritan in John 8:48. I don't say this lightly, but think the kind of relationship you find between Israelis and Palestinians today.

33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

The point of the parable is not “be nice like the Samaritan guy” or “if the Samaritan can love the Jew, then we can love all races”. The point is not racial harmony, though that’s a consequence. **The point is that the commandment to love God and others has no limit.**

It is a natural condition of sin to compromise on this, to have a list of attributes that someone needs to meet in order for them to deserve my love – that they are not our neighbour so I can ignore God’s command. So, the annoying person at work, the Satanist, the Queenslander during Origin don’t count.

The shock for the lawyer was that it was the Samaritan who was the truly Godly person in the parable, not the Jewish religious leader. That must have stung. The Samaritan is the hero because he does something the other two do not - **the Samaritan sees like the others see but he reacts differently, he reacts with compassion.**

Why? Jesus reveals the answer with his final question which is the key to the passage.

The follower of Jesus does not ask “Who is my neighbour?” (i.e. does this person meet my criteria to earn my love? This is the question of the Priest and Levite in the story) but **“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”** (i.e. How do I prove I’m a good neighbour to this person?). The question is not if that person is worthy to receive your compassion but how you can show Jesus’ compassion to that person. I like the way R. C. Sproul puts it - **“Compassion has consumed the Samaritan. He interrupted his journey and assumed responsibility for this wounded man.”** Plenty of people will interrupt your journey today or this week. The challenge is, how do we react?

Jesus’ question shows that the commands to love God and others has no confines or boundaries. At first, you see it in the life of **Bob Pierce**, who founded World Vision in 1950 after encountering profound poverty and suffering in Asia. He became famous for the prayer he wrote in his Bible: “Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God.” He then spent years travelling, preaching, raising money and responding personally to enormous human need.

But eventually it broke him. He resigned as president in 1967 as his relationships with his family and work deteriorated badly. Even World Vision's own account in 1978 states that “the constant strain of preaching, ministering, traveling and administering a growing organization proved too much.” He gave and gave and gave but trying to show compassion to all burnt him out.

So, how can we sustain this loving without limits without burning out? Because stopping, helping, paying, all takes time and effort. So, how do I not burn out on this?

3) Feeding

I’ve always thought the next part in Luke 10 was just another interesting story but unrelated. However,

now I think it's here for a far deeper reason.

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

In many ways, we normally admire someone with Martha's work ethic. Martha isn't doing anything sinful. She's showing hospitality. Who is being a **"Good Samaritan" in this story?** Who is meeting the needs of others? Isn't Martha showing the sacrificial love that Jesus commends? Not really.

Martha is looking for self-pity and when she doesn't get it, it makes her angry – even at Jesus. Think about it, Martha is so incensed, she accuses Jesus of not caring. **Martha outward signs of love (love for a neighbour) aren't coming from a heart of compassion and love for others and God.** She's doing it because it's her duty and she wants to be acknowledged for her sacrifice – and Jesus opposes self-pity as much as he opposes pride.

41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Jesus deliberately using the term "portion" here as a metaphor to teach a far more important lesson here. **Martha is feeding on the need for public acknowledgement** ("look at my sacrificial service to Jesus"). Mary, however, is feeding herself on Jesus. Jesus' portion is what our souls are made for.

Jesus makes this point in **John 6**. The people have come for more food from Jesus, but Jesus offers something far greater.

34 "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread." (fulfil our physical needs)

35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

We're all have desires for life, for happiness, for purpose – it is as natural as getting hungry and thirsty. **Blaise Pascal "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end."** Just like you can't stop yourself from getting hungry, you can't stop yourself from desiring

life, joy, purpose – it is the way God has made us. And Jesus makes the extraordinary claim here and in John 6 that all our deepest longings and desires are found in him.

I think the point Luke is making is that this is how we love in hard times how we love sacrificially – we feed on Jesus.

But what does this feeding look like daily? Let's try to be specific. When I was a young Christian, I came across the story of **George Muller**, who was a Christian minister and evangelist in England in the 18th century, **famous for founding orphanages in Bristol** that cared for over 10,000 children by the end of his life which brought many pressures. He resolved never to ask for money but relied on God to provide. But there were many times when Muller woke up in the morning and he knew that he didn't have enough food for his orphans. Put yourself in this scenario: You wake up tomorrow morning, and you don't have enough food for yourself and family and everyone at this church who relies on you for food, what do you do? What is your mindset? Let's call Woolworths or Coles see if they can help. Maybe call some governmental department.

And spiritually, how important is your quiet time or devotions on these days? And if you did do them, what's your purpose and motivation with all these pressures? What Muller learnt to do each morning was this. Now this quote has had a very long lasting and profound effect on me as I wake up before my kids to do my devotions and most days, I don't want to. This quote has sustained me.

"I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man may be nourished...[How was he to do this? Sit in silence willing himself to be happy? It's not a mystery] I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God, and to meditation on it". To feed on it. To feed himself on the joy of following Jesus before he met the world, before the pressures of the world required sacrificial love from him.

This is the same lesson from the Psalmists in Psalm 1:2 "but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night."

The message of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is an unbearable burden to complete in our own strength. And the answer is not, try harder, or let's set up church systems do ensure we don't burn out. But to make your soul happy in Jesus, to feed on Jesus like Mary does.

Song – Consider Christ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TH1YlfxqbuQ>

1.

2. Consider Christ, the source of our salvation
2. Consider Christ that he could trust His Father
That he should take the penalty for me
In the garden of Gethsemane
Though he was pure, a lamb without a blemish;
Though full of dread and fearful of the anguish
He took my sins and nailed them to the tree
He drank the cup that was reserved for me.

Chorus
Chorus

My Lord and God
3. Consider Christ, for death he has defeated
You are so rich in mercy
And he arose, appeared for all to see
Mere words alone are not sufficient thanks.
And now he sits at God's right hand in heaven
So take my life, transform, renew & change me
Where he prepares a resting place for me. That I might be a living sacrifice

Closing. **36** *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"* **37** *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."* (Luke 10:36-37)