

Sermon: "The time in between the time of waiting"  
Rev. 1:4-8, John 18: 36-38.  
November 24<sup>th</sup> 2024.  
Rev. Margaret MacDonald.

Prayer: We hear the words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Thank you for sending Jesus to save us, to redeem the world and reconcile us with one another. Amen

The writer of Revelation promised, "We will see God." Jesus is the beginning and the end. We are waiting the time in between time for the second coming of Jesus as Judge, Ruler and Saviour. What are the signs? Would it be in a vision? "We will see God."

Last summer I took this photo when Ken and I visited Nuremberg Palace of Justice. Courtroom 600 is known for "Major War Criminals trial." For example leaders who were responsible for the Holocaust.

I was thrilled to enter this courtroom where great leaders seek justice for the atrocities done to people. Once I was there I could feel a sense of awe, a kind of fear for the rule of law as I observed the symbols in the courtroom. There were no trials on that day but we watched a short video with some renowned international Human Rights lawyers like Amal Clooney.

These features were arranged in 1945. The statue on the wall depicts the fall of humanity (Adam & Eve) and a man holding the sword a symbol of the German law and a man holding a scroll symbolizing the Roman law- the two foundations for the German authority on law. In the centre is a cross with the statue of Jesus.

We remember the words "Never again." Yet, history keeps repeating itself with war criminals. This experience taught me that *"A change of law is necessary but most importantly is a change of heart for peace in our world."*

Today's text John takes us into the courtroom where Jesus was on trial before Pilate. The crowd gathered to witness this trial. Imagine yourself sitting in the courtroom where Pilate puts Jesus on trial. Will the verdict be **"a change of heart?"**

Jesus is on trial for these charges 1. Blasphemy, declare himself "Son of God," 2. Treason "King of the Jews." 3. Opposed Roman authority/law: subverting the nation rule of law. Jesus answered "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me ...

But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." **37** Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to te

stify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” **38** Pilate asked him, **“What is truth?”**

Bruce Thielemann writes: “The pulpit calls those anointed to it as the sea calls sailors; and like the sea, it batters and bruises and does not rest... To preach, to really preach is to die naked a little at a time and to know each time you do it you must do it again.” God’s word holds power on our lives. Each time I preached on a text I discovered greater mystery of God upon our lives. My faith journey and life’s experiences inspire a sense of awe for the wideness of God’s mercy.

The preacher also encounters God in these sacred words. *“We are not alone, God is with us.”* Through faith, our words and actions tell the story of Jesus. Was there a change of heart for those who were in the crowd at the trial of Jesus? In the court of law truth is that which bears evidence. Will we see a human face in the form of Jesus who stood before Pilate? How do we know the truth?

*“In a mysterious way the Holy Spirit takes our words and runs them through the grid of the listener’s life, customizing the application to a needy heart in order to make a difference.”* We tell the story of Jesus’ with these words in action: “in as much as you have done it to the least of your brothers/sisters and neighbour you have done it unto me.” Remember the voice of the Holy Spirit who calls us through the voices of others teaching us to come home to God where we belong. It is the life giving Spirit who leads people to a change of heart.

Would you recognize the Spirit through the touch of a loved one who is caring? In these simple ways you feel God’s love every day. The Spirit empowers us for this ministry through reading God’s word. We are a resurrection people called to bear the truth to the world. This is the evidence we carry deep within our faith. We tell the story: Christ is alive! Christ brings us home to God! Christ offers new life and a change of heart. We care for our neighbours and strangers. We catch glimpses of God’s vision for what God is calling us do here. Is God revealing something new in this town? How do we know this “new thing” will make a difference?

I grew up with a liturgical response after the reading of the gospel: **“Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, Have mercy on us, mercy on us, mercy on us.”** I hold this image in my heart of a gracious God, merciful and compassionate. This truth has impacted my faith journey. God cares about human dignity and the humanitarian needs in Bolton and the world.

The disciple Andrew was part of the crowd who followed John. Over the centuries people have been waiting for the coming Messiah-the Anointed One. People were and are waiting for God to bring healing and deliverance. We are waiting for God to bring New Life to those who do not know Jesus Christ as yet. We are waiting for God to reveal something new that will turn people towards Jesus.

At the shout of John, **“Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,”** Andrew turned around and his eyes met the eyes of Jesus. Andrew knew that there was no turning back and became a faithful follower of Jesus Andrew along with few others by some

strange, deep, inner compulsion followed. Jesus who said to them, “**what do you seek?**” They said Rabbi (teacher), where are you staying. Jesus said “**Come and see.**”

We hear the cry of children; creation groans with pain of war, hunger, homelessness, disease, need for justice and peace in our world, communities, homes and hearts.

We are called to gather in this place of worship and to join with the choirs of angels and the host of heaven to sing and praise God. “Praise to the Lord; the Almighty; the God of creation!” We sing and pray for glimpses of hope, release of the captives, cease-fire and peace. While we are waiting we continue the work of Jesus to resist evil, seek Justice and walk to humbly with God. Amen

Intercessory prayers: Request:

God of creation, Alpha and Omega, you teach that your holy realm is mystery. You love us unconditionally. We feel your presence and hear your voice in simple moments of our daily lives.

We pray for wisdom and compassion to let your love flow through us bringing life and hope to those in pain, grief and need. **God of mercy; Hear us.**

We pray for all people, those who need clean water for daily life, people who are homeless and need a place for shelter as winter approaches. We pray for those who are challenge by natural disasters and weather conditions that make life and travel difficult.

**God of mercy; Hear us.**

We hear the cry of others who need a healing touch. Grant compassion and endurance to all medical practitioners as they care the sick, seniors and those preparing for surgery of all kinds. We are thankful for the healthcare provided in our country and province.

We pray for the leaders of our government to make wise and meaningful decisions that will improve the quality of life for all people. We remember the young adults and people searching for a job to take care of their daily needs. **God of mercy; Hear us.**

Merciful God, open the door of opportunity for us to discover new beginnings. Help us to seek different ways of serving you. We pray that your people will walk humbly with you. Sometimes we feel tired and growth seems dull but you o God, never fail to show up right on time and rescue us from worries. With you all things are possible. We pray with an open heart for change to happen. **Our Father...**