

# *Straight from the "Hart"*

September 17, 2023

**Prepare:**



Sharing the journey  
to know, love, and serve

Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

## **Canticle of God's Glory**

(P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

P: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father --

**C: We worship you. We give you thanks. We praise you for your glory.**

P: Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:

**C: Have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayers.**

P: For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

**C: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.**

ad. from "Canticle of God's Glory" in United Methodist Hymnal, p 83

## **Opening Prayer**

O Lord, our God, your faithful goodness and grace is beyond our understanding! We come out to greet you with honor due your name. We want to contribute to your kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven. It is a privilege to share in your mission in the world through this congregation. Accept our love and gratitude. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **Call to Worship**

We've been in the wilderness – preparing -- now we're almost ready to leave the hot shifting sands under our feet and celebrate spiritual victory God brings to our lives through Jesus. Let's begin by singing our praise to Jesus the King.



## All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Words: Edward Perronet 1779; alt. by John Rippon 1787

Music: Oliver Holden, 1792

1. All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall;  
bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all.  
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all.
2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, ye ransomed from the fall,  
hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all.  
Hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all.
4. Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball,  
to him all majesty ascribe, and crown him Lord of all.  
To him all majesty ascribe, and crown him Lord of all.
6. O that with yonder sacred throng we at his feet may fall!  
We'll join the everlasting song, and crown him Lord of all.  
We'll join the everlasting song, and crown him Lord of all.

### Theme

Once there was a little gray mouse. He lived in the same house as an old gray cat. The little mouse was afraid of the cat. "How happy I would be but for that old cat," he said. "I'm afraid of her all the time. I wish I were a cat."

A fairy heard the little mouse say this. She felt sorry for him. So she turned him into a big gray cat. At first, he was happy. But one day a dog ran after him. "Oh dear!" he said. "It is not much fun to be a cat. I am afraid of that dog all the time. I wish I were a big dog."

Again the fairy heard him. She felt sorry for the old gray cat. So she turned him into a big dog. Once more he felt happy. Then one day he heard a lion roar. "Oh, just hear that lion!" he cried. "I am afraid when I hear him. It is not safe to be a dog after all. How I wish I were a lion. Then I would be afraid of no one."

Off he ran to the fairy. "Dear fairy," he said, "please turn me into a big, strong lion." Again the fairy was sorry for him. She made him into a big, strong lion.

One day a man tried to kill the lion. Once more he ran to the fairy. "What now?" asked the fairy. "Make me into a man, dear fairy," he cried. "Then no one can make me afraid." "Make you into a man!" cried the fairy. "No, indeed, I will not. A man must have a brave heart. You have only the heart of a mouse. So a mouse you shall become again, and a mouse you shall stay." So saying, she turned him back into a little gray mouse, and away he ran to his old home.

"The mouse who was afraid" retold by Catherine T Bryce in The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey. Ed, with commentary by William J Bennett.

Not all humans have “brave hearts”, leading to the adage, “Are you a man or a mouse?” making the hearer consider whether they are making a wise choice, or just afraid to do what they know they should. If it is the latter, then what are we to do? For we of faith – consider Joshua who was now needing to fulfill the shoes of Moses – no small task. The Lord came to Joshua and said

“In the same way I was with Moses, I’ll be with you. I won’t give up on you’ I won’t leave you. Strength! Courage! ... Give it everything you have, heart and soul. Make sure you carry out [the Book of the Law] that Moses commanded you, every bit of it. Don’t get off track, either left or right... Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it. Then you’ll get where you’re going; then you’ll succeed. Haven’t I commanded you? Strength! Courage! Don’t be timid; don’t get discouraged. God, your God, is with you every step you take.”

From Joshua 1:5-9 (MSG)

To put it in the context of our series – rather than trying to find a solution by pretending to be something we are not (a cat, dog, lion), which is shifting sand, we become courageous by building our lives on something sure – on God’s presence, and promise, and the wisdom of his teachings. Our visual for this foundational belief is the Cornerstone, which has been on the floor this whole time – in a place where it had been cast aside (as so many have done) -- but now has been lifted up to a place where we will make use of it.



## Intro to and Bible Reading 1

Jesus teaches religious leaders through a short parable of 2 sons who were given a task by the father. The first son said “no”, but then changed his mind and did it. The second said “yes”, but then did not do it. Jesus asks which did what the father wanted? The religious leaders answer that it is the first son. Jesus accuses them of being the second son, the ones who said “Yes” to God, but then were not fulfilling his will or mission. And even after seeing sinners (those who initially said “No” but then repented and believed), after seeing them turn to God, they still did not believe. Instead, they doubled down on their rejection of Jesus and his teachings. Jesus then goes on to show them how their rejection would play out in reality.

Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He

put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his [share].

The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;  
the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

...the chief priests and Pharisees knew he was talking about them and wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd.

Matthew 21:33-44, summary of 45-46 (NIV)

## Music

Earlier in this series, we heard what God has done to communicate his will and his ways to us, through Moses and through Jesus, and how, by his faithful life and bloody death on the cross, that we can be forgiven when we fail to build our lives on that foundation and slip into the shifting sands of other priorities. Jesus tells us to withstand storms, it will be wise to build not on sand, but on solid rock, on him. (See Matthew 7:24-26) Let’s sing about the hope we build our lives on...



## My Hope is Built

Words: Edward Mote, 1834

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1863

1. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.

2. When Darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil.

(Refrain)

3. His oath, his covenant, his blood supports me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.

(Refrain)

**God Moments** (These were not scripted)

**Music** Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by asking to be blessed so that we may be a blessing for each other and for the world...

### Lord, We Come to Ask Your Blessing

Words: Fred Pratt Green, Music: W Daniel Landes

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Lord, we come to ask your blessing on the love that makes us one;  
here, as Christians, to acknowledge you are Lord, and you alone.

God of love, unless you bless us how can we each other bless?  
Only as you live within us is there depth of happiness.

May our loving be a sharing of the gifts we each possess;  
may no failure or forbearance turn our love to bitterness.

Lord, we come to ask your blessing in the presence of our friends:  
grant us joy that blesses others, grant us love that never ends.

**Prayers** Lord, today we come with gratitude. We thank you for your provision and care. We do not take for granted the gift of home and food. For the testimonies that we have heard today. We are so grateful for the love of family and community and this church family. We are thankful for this beautiful place to gather in your name, for here we are challenged, encouraged and reminded of who you are and what you have done. We are thankful for the work you are doing in our hearts and lives, as individuals and as a group. Continue your transforming work so that we who

have been loved will love; we with whom you have been patient will show patience; and we who have been shown kindness will show kindness to others. **Petitions**

That reminds us to think of those requests that have been made today and in recent days... We pray for these \* Earl Campbell requests prayers for daughter Sara who is having oral surgery, \* Jan Martin asks we pray for brother Reese and his son Calvin as they search for a new lawyer, \* and for friend Darlene Tidmore who remains in the hospital, had a heart attack and a stent while there, and continues to have several problems, \* and Dave Babcock who is searching for a better job. We also pray for \* another request by Earl Campbell, for Brian Slutter, who had a severe heart attack this past week, \* and for Jim Mallott, and for Al, a friend of the Gordoniers who at last word remained hospitalized with complications following an auto accident. \* and we continue to pray for those unnamed except in our hearts and minds, and we pause just a moment to offer a chance to lift these to you from our hearts to yours... (Pause)

Now help us hear your word anew, that the risen Christ may bring life and hope through your Holy Spirit, that we may be better empowered to live as you taught us to pray.... **Lord's Prayer**

### **Intro to and Bible Reading 2**

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the foundational rock on which we can successfully build our lives. This hope was nothing new even in the days he lived. Hear this song of prayer. It was written as a part of the liturgy for the enthronement of a new king and its hope of a new and glorious future. It prays that the king being coronated will possess the character traits of the ideal king, of God himself. It makes a connection between the celebration of king ascending to the throne and the festival of the kingship of God. So it is often interpreted as a hopeful prayer for the Messiah and the kind of rule he would bring to the world.

God, give the king your fairness in judgment, endow this royal son with your righteousness, so that he can govern your people rightly and your poor with justice. May he defend the oppressed among the people, save the needy and crush the oppressor. May he endure as long as the sun shines and as long as the moon glows, through all generations. Let him be the king from now on! May he be like rain falling on mown grass, like showers watering the earth. May they pray for him continually and bless him all day long. May the nations be blessed through him and call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the

God of Israel, who alone works wonders. Praise his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.

**Music** This hymn was inspired by the Psalm we just heard. If comfortable let's stand before the sermon and sing.

### **Hail to the Lord's Anointed**

Words: James Montgomery, 1821

Music: Gesangbuch der H.W.k. Hofkapelle;  
1784 alt; ad., harm. by W.H. Monk, 1868

1. Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son!  
Hail in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free;  
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.
2. He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong;  
to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong;  
to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,  
whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.
3. He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;  
love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.  
Before him on the mountains, shall peace, the herald, go,  
and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.
4. To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend;  
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.  
The tide of time shall never his covenant remove;  
his name shall stand forever; that name to us is love.

### **Sermon Prepare – for Victory**

So as we pick up the story, the recent raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus was stirring a lot of excitement at the Passover festival. Two plot lines were being advanced. One is that many people were beginning to believe in Jesus because people who saw Lazarus restored to life couldn't stop talking about it (John 12:11). The other story line being pushed forward was the religious leaders' panicked plots to preserve their way of doing Temple and nation by killing both Lazarus and Jesus (John 11:45ff; 12:11,12,17,42). The large Passover crowd heard Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.

Now we are going to look at a festival liturgy which is a part of Passover, and like the Psalm we heard earlier, is a coronation song hoping for this great new future. You will play a role in it because we are going to kind of act it out through

responsive readings. It is a dramatic liturgy that is used for several festivals. Try and put yourself in the story -- imagine you have made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and now stand outside the entrance of this massive Temple – I’m sure you’ve all seen pictures or models of what it was like when it was in its fullness. A huge crowd of people are pressing around you shoulder to shoulder everywhere, for hundreds of thousands of people come. A Temple leader comes out and calls to the crowd:

L: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Psalm 118:1)

Then he addresses the various types of people who have gathered – (and you are going to play all the different groups).

L: Let Israel (God’s covenant people) say:

**P: His love endures forever.**

L: Let the house of Aaron (the priests and religious leaders) say:

**P: His love endures forever.**

L: Let those who fear the Lord (non-Jews, (who from now on I will affectionately call “outsiders” who are joining the faith -- let them)) say:

**P: His love endures forever.**

(Psalm 118:2-4)

Then the king addresses the people. He begins by recounting the conclusion of a fierce battle:

L: When I was hard pressed, pushed to the wall with nowhere to go, in my distress, I called to the Lord, and he brought me to a spacious place. (Psalm 118:5 (NIV, NLT, MSG))

A place where there was ample room to freely roam, safe from dangerous threats. The king looks back on the victorious battle. He humbly and gratefully realizes that human strength would have been futile. He gives a plethora of phrases that continues to put the credit for his success squarely on the shoulders of God, to whom he owes everything. Phrases like: Because the Lord is with me, I don’t need to be afraid of anything mere humans can do to me. He is my helper, my champion, I look in triumph on my enemies – he doesn’t say “I triumphed” but he watches the triumph happen, almost as if a passive spectator -- he wasn’t -- but he is making it clear to the crowd who was responsible for victory, it wasn’t him it was God who was doing it through him. He relied on taking refuge in God’s safety and power and does not rely on the skill of humanity (See Psalm 118:6-9 (NIV, NLT, MSG)).

Having made perfectly clear how the battle was won and who won it, he now goes on to describe it: Hostile nations have completely surrounded me, swarming



around me like bees, pushing me back like a wild crackling prairie fire until I was about to fall (to my destruction); but the Lord rescued me, and helped me and by the authority of his name, I cut them down, consuming them as quickly as burning thorns; and the king concludes by proclaiming a line that elicits the excited response from the entire crowd

L: The Lord is my strength, my defense, my song; he has become my salvation and given me victory! Shouts of joy and victory resound in the camp of the godly.

**P: ...The Lord's right hand is lifted high in triumph. The Lord's strong right arm has done mighty and glorious things!** (Psalm 118:14-16 NIV, NLT)

And then the king recapitulates the severity of the battle.

L: I will not die, (as I should have based on the powers of the enemies that swarmed about me) but live and proclaim what the Lord has done. [The Lord has tested me severely in this battle], but he has not let me die (See Psalm 118:17-18 NIV, NLT, MSG)

Only by his power, the king claims, do I continue to live, and win the victory over the enemy that would destroy me. This victory makes it possible for those outside the faith to enter the faith, and so those new to the faith to burst out in response to the king's entrance...

L: Swing wide the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. (To which the gatekeepers emphasize that this gate is restricted and only God's holy people are allowed).

**P: These gates lead to the presence of the Lord through which the godly may enter.** (Psalm 118:19-20 (NIV, NLT, MSG))

And in a dramatization of God's reaching love, the gates are opened, and these thrilled "outsiders" are welcomed in with all the rest of God's people and they claim God's grace as their own

**P: I will give you thanks for answering my prayer. You have become my salvation, and are giving me victory!** (Psalm 118:21, emphasis added, (NIV, NLT))

The long established faithful also marvel at God's work on behalf of the king, and for the benefit of those God seekers, these "outsiders" who have joined them. What a miracle it is any time a person comes to faith! So, the faithful quote two now famous sayings.

**P: The stone the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous to see. The Lord has done it this very day. (He has made the day.) We will rejoice today and be glad in it.** (Psalm 118:22-24)

Just to be clear – what exactly is it that God has done? He has snatched the king, rejected and surrounded by swarming enemies, from a battle leading to certain death and brought him to safety, and in saving the king, the king has saved – not only the nation, which was often rejected by the world; but even those outside – those God seekers who were outside of the faith, and brought them in as well, those people -- who were often rejected by the long-term faithful – were also brought into salvation.

One commentator noted that the massive cornerstone on the southwest corner of the Temple had to bear the pressure of great weight coming from multiple directions. If it failed, the whole building would slide down into the Valley of Hinnom (later translated “Gehenna”) – which was a perpetually burning rubbish dump – a powerful visual for the eternal fires of hell and destruction.

This Cornerstone King was critical for holding up the salvation of all people, to keep them from sliding into that horrible place, the long faithful and outsiders alike. The faithful are amazed to see what miraculous work God did through his king; opening the way for even “outsiders” to be welcomed in!

Now remember our imagery, we are all standing together outside, and now we are moving through the gates inside the massive Temple. The old faithful are inspired to consider the battles that still lay ahead in their future. They shout with joy and ask for future victories. The first phrase is literally a plea in Hebrew. It forms one word, (we are all familiar with this) – Hosanna -- a phrase and word born of such confidence in their God that it was not very often used as a plea (O Save) but as a word of praise because we knew he was going to help and save – Hosanna].

**P: Lord, Please Save us! Please Lord, grant us success!** (Psalm 118:25 (NIV, NLT)

(Or in other words, Hosanna, Hosanna.) Now everyone moves from inside the gates to deeper into the sanctuary, surrounding the altar. The Temple leader greets them,

L: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. (and they reply...)

**P: From the house of the Lord, we bless you.**

L: The Temple Leader responds: The Lord is God, and he is shining upon us. (That is, God is present here among us and with us! He invites the people to the festival to dance around the altar) With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. (See Psalm 118:26-27)

This action symbolically imparted holiness to the participants -- the horns in each corner of the altar demonstrated the strength of God's love, and in non-festival settings, fugitives would often cling to them and beg for the saving mercy of God! The festival's altar procession was powerful expression of God's gracious acceptance which again leads the outsiders to declare ownership of their new faith:

L: You are my God, and I will praise you. You are my God, and I will exalt you. (To which everyone responds and concludes the liturgy how they started by saying)

**P: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever.**

(Psalm 118:28-29 emphasis added (NIV, NLT))

And they use palm boughs, and we kind of have a palm tree there as part of our imagery... They were used long before our Palm Sunday. have been a part of festival liturgies for a long time. When Syrians captured Jerusalem, outlawed Judaism and desecrated the Temple, it prompted the Jewish Maccabean revolt.



Eventually they won and carried in palms as they repossessed Jerusalem. They also processed with palms when they cleansed and rededicated the Temple. Palm images were put on coins and became a symbol of Maccabean nationalism and political power over Israel as they restored their nation.

Then, when Jesus sparked a particularly hyper-charged festival by calling Lazarus to life some 150 years later, the symbolic meaning of the palms had moved away from Psalm 118's spiritual symbol of a Universal God who welcomed all believers to his altar. John's choice of words and the way he orders the details of the story emphasizes the nationalistic political overtones of most of those palm wavers. They went out to meet him (an action that is done to welcome political leaders to a city), They called "Hosanna" (a phrase that addressed kings) and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord", transferring the meaning of the line from the pilgrim entering God's presence in the Temple to the Messiah entering to liberate the Jewish nation. John nails it home by adding the phrase the

one who comes “as the King of Israel” (See John 12:12 ff) They were welcoming him as a national deliverer in the line of Maccabean liberators.

Jesus responds to the clamor by sitting on a donkey. John quotes soundbites from the prophets Zephaniah and Zechariah emphasizing that God is in their midst as king, but as a king and holy city to whom all the peoples of the world are welcomed to come to seek refuge. This king/God, say the prophets, will command peace to the Gentiles and reign from sea to sea, save the people from enemies, and especially save the lame and gather the outcast. In short, the people interpreted Lazarus’ rising as a sign of the coming new life of nationalistic glory for Israel, while John declares this gift of life is for all the people of the earth.

He reinforces this universal hope by reintroducing the alternate plot line -- the line and plot that would surround and destroy Jesus because no matter how busy their buzzing was, and how many fires they tried to start, they couldn’t seem to stop Jesus – “the *whole world* was going after him.” And in case the readers hadn’t gotten it yet, John inserts a story where worshipping Greeks ask Philip to introduce to Jesus. (See John 12:19 ff) We are back to the beginning of the Psalm where all the people, including outsiders coming to the faith all say in amazement:

L: Let (all) those who fear the Lord say:

**P: His love endures forever.** (Psalm 118:4 emphasis added (NIV))

And right on cue, just as the king of the Psalm begins to recount the fierce battle in which he miraculously survived, Jesus begins to pre-count the fierce deadly battle that is now just days ahead for him, and how he would die – but God would intervene, and he would be glorified and lifted up, thus drawing all the world to himself. (See John 12:23 ff)

The crowd understood the phrase “lifted up” to mean being killed, but not being lifted from the grave or ascending to heaven -- they didn’t get that yet. So, they asked how the eternal Messiah can be lifted up to die and who is he? Jesus turns an intellectual physical question into a spiritual moral answer. As the Psalm talked about God’s light (his presence) shining on them, Jesus says they must trust and walk in the light while they can, for the light will not be with them much longer, and then, to make the point even more clear by disappearing for a while. The next time he emerges into the public eye he will be in the middle of the fierce cosmic battle, rejected, tried, beaten. The remainder of the chapter continues the other plot line, about those who continued to actively not believe in Jesus or believe in him secretly because they feared people rather than God, (something the king of Psalm

118 did not do) and then a monologue that sums up the consequences of rejecting Jesus, (See John 12:34-ff) the parable you heard earlier.

At some point after entering Jerusalem for Passover and before he temporarily hides himself away. He had this long dialog with religious leaders who were trying to entrap him and to whom he told these parables. God graciously provides everything we need to be faithful stewards of life. A call to grow and bear fruit, a wall of protection to help us do that -- set around where he has planted us, an ability to take a look at the big picture (the watchtower) so we can see the big picture, know what is going on and how to proceed – and also a press to process the fruit into something worthwhile. We can be useful. All this is God's gift to us.

But as the parable goes, instead of being good stewards of what we've been given/ what we were allowed to use, the people of the parable (and the religious leaders of Jesus' day) rather than marveling at God's gracious provision --- the long standing practice was to hoard God's resources and blessings and power to themselves and kill anyone who got in the way of that, (meaning the priests and prophets who told the truth all the way through the Old Testament) right up to and including now even the owner's son, who they were about to kill. When Jesus asked what should be done to these evil, murderous stewards of the vineyard, the religious leaders, even though they knew Jesus was talking about them, gave the honest answer (that is not something you are going to hear today) They admitted that these murderous stewards should be removed and replaced by others who would bear good fruit and give the owner his due by sharing it with the world.

So we come to the bottom line choice of the day. God has won an amazing hard-fought victory and spiritual provision for us, providing us with a cornerstone upon which everything in life is built, and everything is held together. Will we break our lives against the unmovable cornerstone because we reject our need for God? Or will we be fruitful by building our lives on the foundation of the cornerstone of Christ – and watch his marvelous victory work in our lives? As we contemplate with paper in hand, ask God to help you discover **what victory does God want to win for me in my life, and how might he want me to build on that victory...** (repeat)

### **Invitation to the Water (with prayer and meditation)**

We'll come to the water in a few moments, the living water of Jesus Christ, to offer the prayers we have scribbled on the paper, or imagine written there. Let's pray as we ponder.

Lord, when we contemplate the deathly battle you fought and ultimately won for us, but not only for us -- but for all people; and when we consider what gifts and provisions you have given for us that we may be fruitful in this life; we are awed by your love and what you have done for us in Jesus.

We confess that we too often seek your blessings to be blessed, but not to be fruitful. We hoard your love and protection to ourselves and forget that Jesus came in your name not just for us, but to open heaven to all who will believe. We recognize that sometimes we still flounder in the wilderness, defeated by bad habits, or lacking the discipline to build good ones. Help us, then, to put your words into practice is like a wise person who builds his house on a rock – so that no storm will undo us. For you have won the battle for us, now teach how to build our lives on that victory that we may be faithful and fruitful.

Lord, like the king of the Psalm, we recognize we cannot win the battle without your intervention. We run to you for refuge. We cling to the horns of your altar. We cling to your goodness and grace. We claim your faithful love. You've laid it all out for us in your Word. You strengthen us and hold us up and cause us to stand – and you will not let us slide down to destruction, we will break ourselves or be crushed by you as long as we are leaning on you.

Now Lord, the piano is about to play the music to these assuring words (slightly paraphrased): The care the eagle gives her young in the nest is like your tender love for us; and when the time is right for us to venture in flight, you press us to boldly try, to strive for daring height, and if we happen to helplessly flutter and fall, your mighty wings will lift and bear us up, - one and all. What victory do we need, Lord, what victory shall we strive for? We jot it down, or imagine it jotted down, and when we are invited, we will come to you, the living waters, and let our thoughts and dreams dissolve into a cloud of prayers to you.

### **Instrumental Music    *The Care the Eagle Gives Her Young***



**Music** We've heard the story of how Jesus has won the battle, so let's not build on the sand of lesser things but build on the cornerstone so that we will be God's faithful and fruitful people at all times and experience God's victory in our lives. If comfortable let's stand and sing how his faithful love endures forever.

### **Victory in Jesus**

Words & Music: Eugene M. Bartlett, 1939

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1. I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory,  
how he gave his life on Calvary to save a wretch like me;  
I heard about his groaning, of His precious blood's atoning,  
then I repented of my sins and won the victory.

#### Refrain

O victory in Jesus, my Savior forever!  
He sought me and bought me with his redeeming blood;  
he loved me 'ere I knew him, and all my love is due him;  
he plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

2. I heard about his healing, of His cleansing power revealing,  
how he made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see;  
and then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,"  
and somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory.

#### Refrain

3. I heard about a mansion he has built for me in glory,  
and I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea;  
about the angels singing and the old redemption story,  
and some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory.

#### Refrain

## Series Blessing

Now in the victorious hope of faithful-ness and fruitfulness, Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

18<sup>th</sup> Cent. aphorism, attr. to John Wesley

### Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan, © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Go to the world! Go into ev'ry place.  
Go live the Word of God's redeeming grace.  
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.  
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Pstr: Amen. **C: Amen**

CCLI # 2561297



Randy Bell and Donna Allmond (not pictured) were the instruments for today's service.