

# Service of Holy Communion

## September 13, 2020

### WELCOME

### PRELUDE

One Voice

*"Trust in You"* Lauren Daigle, Michael Farren, Paul Mabury

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

**Amen.**

### GATHERING SONG #838 *Beautiful Savior*

- 1 Beautiful Savior,  
King of creation,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Truly I'd love thee,  
truly I'd serve thee,  
light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
- 2 Fair are the meadows,  
fair are the woodlands,  
robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;  
Jesus is fairer,  
Jesus is purer,  
he makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine,  
 fair is the moonlight,  
 bright the sparkling stars on high;  
 Jesus shines brighter,  
 Jesus shines purer  
 than all the angels in the sky.

4 Beautiful Savior,  
 Lord of the nations,  
 Son of God and Son of Man!  
 Glory and honor,  
 praise, adoration,  
 now and forevermore be thine!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823-1904

### **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

*“He is Exalted”*

Verse

He is exalted  
 The King is exalted on high  
 I will praise Him  
 He is exalted forever exalted  
 And I will praise His name

Chorus

He is the Lord  
 Forever His truth shall reign  
 Heaven and earth  
 Rejoice in His holy name  
 He is exalted  
 The King is exalted on high

Repeat all

CCLI Song # 17827

Twila Paris

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### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O Lord God, **merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## THE WORD

### FIRST READING: *Genesis 50:15-21*

*After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.*

<sup>15</sup>Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" <sup>16</sup>So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, <sup>17</sup>'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup>Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM: *Psalms 103:8-13*

<sup>8</sup>**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

<sup>9</sup>you will not always accuse us, nor will you keep your anger forever.

<sup>10</sup>**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

<sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

<sup>12</sup>**As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

<sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

### SECOND READING: *Romans 14:1-12*

*This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.*

<sup>1</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. <sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup>Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

<sup>7</sup>We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

<sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**      *"Sing Alleluia"*

Sing Alleluia to the Lord. Sing Alleluia to the Lord. Sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia to the Lord. (*repeat*)

### **GOSPEL:**    *Matthew 18:21-35*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the eighteenth chapter

#### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.*

<sup>21</sup>Peter came and said to [Jesus], "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be

tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

I wonder if what makes forgiveness – deep forgiveness for serious injury – so hard for us is that we forget how unkind, spiteful, prejudiced, blind and proud we, ourselves, actually are.

Going along day to day in the world, we don't think about the things we've done or neglected to do, to and for other people, like the countless times we have been grossly mistaken and just brushed it off. We don't recognize our own arrogance – assuming that we, alone, know what is accurate and true. We're unaware of the privileges we have, living as fairly well-off people in the United States of America, how much we have that we assume is rightfully ours because we've “worked for it,” even though other people work just as hard and have next-to-nothing. We don't notice how cavalier we are about wasting water or polluting the air or throwing out plastic and other trash that will never break down into the earth again. I wonder if we are slow to forgive others, because we have forgotten how very much we are forgiven every day.

The parable in today's gospel keeps reminding me of the story of Nathan and King David in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 12. Let me remind you what that story is about, so you'll be ready for what Nathan, the prophet, did.

After having run from King Saul for years and fought innumerable battles with a band of outlaw soldiers, David was finally king of Israel. He was a popular, well-loved king, not with everyone but with much of the nation. He was secure in his position and rightfully so. As king, he could have most anything he wanted (*who would refuse the king?*), so when he saw Uriah's beautiful wife Bathsheba bathing at her house and wanted her, he sent for her and lay with her. Then he sent her back home.

Bathsheba became pregnant. Her husband, Uriah, could not have been the father since he'd been off fighting in David's army for months. Fighting for the king. David sent for Uriah and tried to get him to go home and lay with his wife, but Uriah (*perhaps suspecting something*) did not do that. When it became clear Uriah would not go home to his wife, David had Uriah killed in battle. Then he brought Bathsheba to his palace and married her himself. Problem solved.

God sent the prophet, Nathan, to confront David, but how do you confront a powerful king about his sins? Nathan did it by lulling David into a touching story about a poor man who had one little lamb that he loved dearly and treated as a daughter. The lamb lay on the man's breast and ate food from his hand. But a rich neighbor had a visitor come to town and not wanting to take one of his own vast flock to feed the visitor, he took the poor man's little lamb, killed it, grilled it, and fed it to the visitor.

David was enraged by the story. He jumped up and shouted “The man who did this deserves to die!” At which point Nathan looked at David and said, “You are the man.” David had many wives; Uriah had had only the one.

Today's gospel story works in exactly the same way. Peter's initial question seems reasonable. We, too, would like to know how many times we have to keep

forgiving the same person. When Jesus answers, “As many times as it takes” – which is what he meant by 77 times – we are not convinced. It seems a lot to ask. So Jesus tells us a story.

One of our neighbors owed the government 2 billion dollars (*that’s about what ‘ten thousand talents’ would be*). The man, we’ll call him Fred, had owed it for years and was unable to pay it. Finally, the government decided to evict Fred from his nice house, sell all his furniture and his cars, put him in prison and make his wife and kids work, free, for the government their whole lives, even though this wouldn’t come close to paying the debt. Fred was overcome by despair; he knew he could not pay what he owed, yet the fate before him was unbearable. He fell in front of the federal judge, and begged him, “Please, have pity on me. I swear, I’ll pay you everything. Just give me more time.” And what do you know, the judge had pity on Fred, releasing him and his family, and forgiving them the entire debt. They were free to start all over! Clean slate.

Fred came back to the neighborhood shortly thereafter. He went and rang the doorbell at Mike’s house. Mike answered and Fred immediately shoved him up against a wall, saying “You owe me \$10,000. Give it to me, now. If you don’t, I’ll have you arrested.” Mike said, “I don’t have it now, Fred, but give me another week and I’ll get it for you.” “No!” shouted Fred. And he called the police and had Mike arrested on the spot.

Don’t you feel like King David did, wanting to jump up and shout, “Fred should be thrown in prison for the rest of his life!? He’s a scoundrel, to be forgiven so much and then not have any mercy on poor Mike.” If Nathan, the prophet, were here he might look at you, at me, at all of us, and say “You are Fred.”

We don’t remember how much we have been forgiven when we hold onto grievances at those who’ve wronged us, or those who won’t admit their own biases, or who don’t see how much they’re being duped. Their offenses seem so egregious, so inexcusable, we feel justified in our disdain, our bitterness, and our condemnation of them. They deserve to be despised: athletes who kneel for the National Anthem; people who tear down public statues – or people who prevent those statues from being removed; wealthy parents who bribe elite Universities to accept their mediocre-student children; our foremothers and forefathers who slaughtered Indigenous peoples and reneged on promises, to get this land for themselves. There’s always someone... someone you and I pick out as not deserving forgiveness, not deserving a break or a chance to start over.

You and I are Fred, quick to forget how much God has forgiven us, and thus, spiteful and bitter toward our neighbor. It’s hard to forgive, it really is. But how can we not, when we have received so much unearned goodness, so many do-overs, such love and welcome no matter what we’ve done or who we’ve been? How can we withhold from others what has been given lavishly to us?

We were among those who lined the streets – maybe scared or confused, maybe caught up in the mania, demanding law and order without quite knowing what had happened. He staggered past, carrying the heavy cross and we joined the shouting, “Crucify him,” or at best we were quiet, afraid to resist. We watched as the cross was lifted high, as his body sagged from its own weight, as he hung for torturous hours

before he died. And we heard him, right before the spirit left his body, say “Father, forgive them.”

We can disagree, and should speak up – clearly and without malice when we do. But we have no excuse to withhold forgiveness. God forgives us so much; without that forgiveness we couldn’t stand. But standing on that forgiveness, and extending it to others, the world itself begins to turn – away from evil and hatred, and into God’s ways of new chances, new possibilities, and new life.

**HYMN OF THE DAY** #697 “*Just a Closer Walk with Thee*”

*Refrain*

Just a closer walk with thee,  
grant it, Jesus, is my plea;  
daily walking close to thee,  
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

- 1 I am weak but thou art strong:  
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long  
as I walk, let me walk close to thee. *Refrain*
  
- 2 Through this world of toil and snares,  
if I falter, Lord, who cares?  
Who with me my burden shares?  
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. *Refrain*
  
- 3 When my feeble life is o'er,  
time for me will be no more;  
guide me gently, safely o'er  
to thy kingdom shore, to thy shore. *Refrain*

Text: North American traditional

**APOSTLES' CREED**

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried;  
He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

God our Savior, amidst turmoil and confusion, gather and inhabit your Church that it may reflect your truth, your forgiveness, and the hope you give. Strengthen the Church to tell and live a different story from the common one of fear, suspicion, and division among people. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has caused ruin and destruction, bring renewal and redeem your world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Guide all nations and all rulers to speak and act for the common welfare. Break down systems and rules that violate people's humanity; raise up ways of living that provide for mutual respect and neighborly care. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and justice wherever there is brokenness and suffering. Give freedom and life to the oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Quiet our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of compassion and mutual care for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your gathered people raise their petitions to you, O Lord...

Put out the fires in California; protect those in the paths of typhoons or hurricanes.

Have mercy on our nation and show us the ways that lead to truth and peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THE DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
 praise him, all creatures here below;  
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host;  
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink,  
 and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,  
 through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)*

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

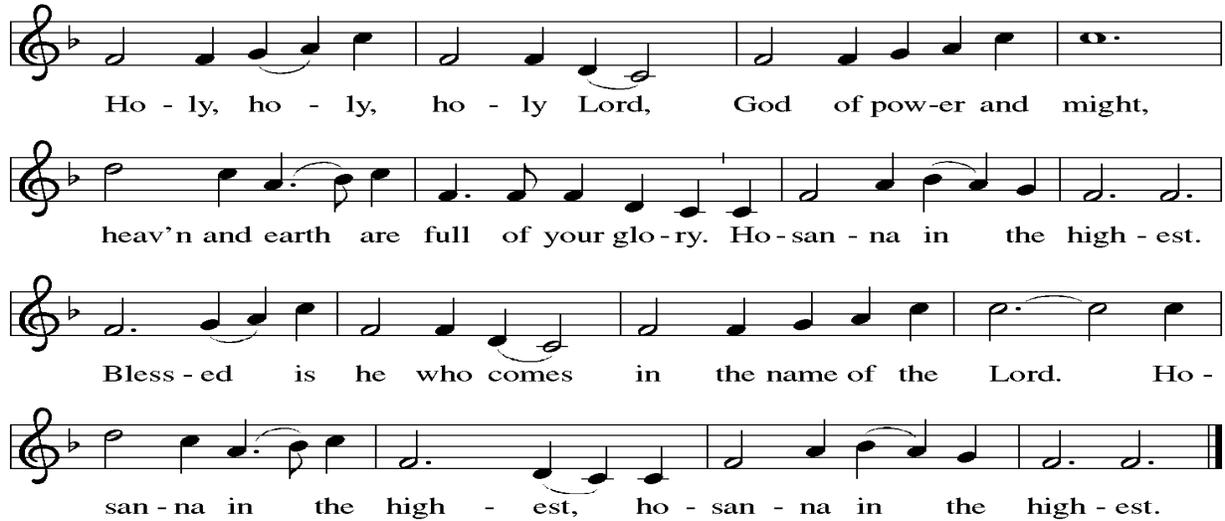
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
 that we should at all times and in all places  
 give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
 through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
 who on this day overcame death and the grave,  
 and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.  
 And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
 with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
 we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*"Holy, Holy, Holy"*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.  
 Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
 san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

### **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

God of marvel and might, from chaos and disorder, you created the heavens and the earth. You formed humans from dust and gave them the breath of life. You brought a weary, abused people out of slavery into the freedom of the Promised Land. And when the time had come, you sent your Son, not to condemn, but so that the world might be saved through him. We celebrate his life, death, and resurrection, as we remember...

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be thy name,  
 thy kingdom come,  
 thy will be done,  
 on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
 and forgive us our trespasses,  
 as we forgive those  
 who trespass against us;  
 and lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
 and the power, and the glory,  
 forever and ever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the banquet table where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. (*please consume the bread*)

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. (*please drink from the cup*)

**BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Midweek Bible Study resumes this Wednesday, September 16, 10:30 to 11:30 am via Zoom. We will begin reading through the Gospel of Luke. Let Pastor Kris know if you would like to join the study; all are welcome.

The food distribution ministry at Emmanuel AME is going well. If you are interested in helping one Tuesday morning, 7:30 to mid-morning, let me know. Over 1500 boxes of fresh produce and beans are given to needy families in San Antonio every Tuesday. It is a great ministry.

Council meets next Sunday, September 20, 3:00 pm on Zoom.

If COVID cases continue to decrease and the pandemic seems reasonably under control, we will resume a weekly, outdoor, prayer service in October – day and time to be determined.

**BLESSING**sung by **One Voice**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
 Make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.  
 The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.

Chorus

Amen, Amen, Amen  
 Amen, Amen, Amen

(repeat all)

CCLI Song # 7147007

Chris Brown | Cody Carnes | Kari Jobe | Steven Furtick

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**CLOSING HYMN**    *“Standing on the Promises”*

Verse 1

Standing on the promises of Christ my King  
 Through eternal ages let His praises ring  
 Glory in the highest I will shout and sing  
 Standing on the promises of God

Chorus

Standing standing  
 Standing on the promises of God my Savior  
 Standing standing  
 I'm standing on the promises of God

Verse 2

Standing on the promises that cannot fail  
 When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail  
 By the living Word of God I shall prevail  
 Standing on the promises of God

Chorus

Verse 3

Standing on the promises I now can see  
 Perfect present cleansing in the blood for me  
 Standing in the liberty where Christ makes free  
 Standing on the promises of God

Chorus

## Verse 4

Standing on the promises of Christ the Lord  
 Bound to Him eternally by love's strong cord  
 Overcoming daily with the Spirit's Sword  
 Standing on the promises of God

Chorus

## Verse 5

Standing on the promises I cannot fall  
 List'ning ev'ry moment to the Spirit's call  
 Resting in my Savior as my All in All  
 Standing on the promises of God

Chorus

CCLI Song # 31803  
 Russell Kelso Carter  
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**DISMISSAL**

Go about your day in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

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