

**First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth, Michigan**  
**2020 Online Chancel Choir Gospel Concert**  
**Sunday, October 11, 2020**  
**Rev. Mark Hovermale**

**Rev. Mark Hovermale – Welcome, Announcements and Opening Prayer**

Welcome to worship here at First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth. Today, Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> is a very special day: It is Gospel Concert Sunday!

I have a few announcements for you first. FPCP and the American Red Cross have joined together to host an upcoming blood drive. Here are the details: Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM in the church's Fellowship Hall. We would like you to make an appointment. You can also stop in, to see if people can be squeezed in without an appointment, but the best way to give blood is to make an appointment at the Red Cross website. That website is [redcross.org](http://redcross.org). You can also download the Red Cross blood donor app at the App Store or Google play. In addition, you can text blood app to 290-999, and there you can schedule an appointment, as well. Thank you for helping us in this great cause.

We also have a new member class coming on October 18<sup>th</sup>. If you're interested, we would love to have you join us. You can sign up online at the church's website, [fpcp.net](http://fpcp.net), or you can email Julie Thompson.

Let us pray. Lord, we come before you and we thank you. We thank you for the gift of music. We thank you specifically for our Chancel Choir and the gift of worship in music they provide for us this morning. We pray that we are inspired to not just worship you but that we live our life in thankfulness for all that you have done for us. In your name we pray. Amen.

And now the gospel concert, presented by our very own Chancel Choir, under the direction of Dr. Jerry Smith.

***[Concert by Chancel Choir, directed by Dr. Jerry Smith]***

**Rev. Mark Hovermale – Homily: Andrae Crouch and “My Tribute”**

Well I hope you are enjoying the gospel concert by the choir this morning. I have to admit I'm here in the chancel and I kind of feel a little badly that I can't hear them live, and I'm sure you're feeling the same way, but the video is pretty darn good.

I really have an affinity for gospel music and choir music. My dad was the choir director and music director at Calvary Baptist Church for over 25 years. We grew up on modern gospel music and choir music. One of the greatest songwriters and singers that forever changed modern gospel music was Andrae Crouch. I would like to share with you a little of his story, and then specifically talk of his song, “*My Tribute*,” which the choir will sing next. Let's look at what we can take away from, “*My Tribute*.”

Andrae Crouch was referred to as the father of modern gospel music. He collaborated with many artists, Stevie Wonder for one. Then he was a big-time producer, a go-to producer in the 1980's and 90's, for such artists as Madonna. He produced for Michael Jackson, Elton John and Little Richard. He was very famous. He was the go-to producer for people who wanted that choir gospel sound in their music.

He is credited as being a very big initiator of the Jesus music in the 1960's and 70's, which really started the whole contemporary music process. On top of that some people actually recorded music he sang. Elvis Presley was one of them. You might know him!

So his music was very, very popular. Now there was some criticism along the way. Some people criticized him, saying, "Well, by using contemporary gospel music, he was kind of dumbing down or watering down the Christian belief system." But he got the last laugh, as his music is in churches all over the world today!

He had some tough times. He lost his mother, his father, and his brother to cancer. Eventually, at the end of his life, he got sick from pneumonia and he passed away, leaving a rich legacy. He won seven Grammy Awards!

Michael W. Smith, the famous Christian artist, said this at Crouch's passing. I want to read this to you verbatim because it's amazing. He said, "I'll never forget hearing Andrae for the first time. It was like someone had opened a whole new world of possibilities for me, musically. I don't think there is anyone who inspired me more growing up than Andrae Crouch. The depth of his influence on Christian music is incalculable! We all owe him so much. I will forever be grateful for the times we got to work together." Wow! What a legacy!

Now the song "*My Tribute*" is an amazing piece. It is one of the greatest songs ever written in modern gospel music. In one of the verses today, the first one,

How can I say thanks  
For the things You have done for me?  
Things so undeserved  
Yet You gave to prove Your love for me;  
The voices of a million angels  
Could not express my gratitude.  
All that I am and ever hope to be;  
I owe it all to Thee.

He's asking the question, "How do I say thanks, how do I say thanks to God for all he's given for me"? And the answer is, we can't do it justice! He even says "The voices of a million angels" can't sum up that thanks. We can simply live a life in an effort to express our thanks, in thanksgiving, to God. He summarized this by saying, "All that I am and ever hope to be I owe it all to Thee."

Now the bridge is just as powerful:

Just let me live my life;  
Let it be pleasing, Lord, to Thee.  
And if I gain any praise,  
Let it go to Calvary.

With His blood He has saved me;  
With His power He has raised me;  
To God be the glory  
For the things He has done.

Again, he reaffirms what we just talked about, that all he could do, and ultimately all we can do is live a life, attempt to live a life, that is pleasing to God.

He has one of the most powerful lines in all of gospel music. Did you catch it? “If I gain any praise let it go to Calvary.” Seven Grammys, countless other awards and accolades-- I'd say a lot of praise fell at Jesus' feet, thanks to his life!

Now my dad—I shared with you, he was choir director for over 25 years at Calvary Baptist. I grew up on these songs. the hymns, the gospel music, the records that we listened to. At 15, it was by force, but I love them now!

My dad shared this line with me, though, all the time. He said, “Only one life will soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last.” Let me say that again, “Only one life will soon be passed. Mark, only what's done for Christ will last.” I think it kind of sums up the point of Andrae Crouch's song.

I have a question for you. Do you and I live our lives to please God? That is the question I want you to think about as you listen to the last song today. Do you and I live lives that are pleasing to God? Let us think about that for a second, that simple question. Let us unpack it. Everything we say and do is to please God! If I could be honest, through a camera lens, with you today, many times there are days and weeks and months and years that go by, where many times the forefront of what I do is not the thought, is this pleasing to God? I just simply, well, I live life. Do you and I live lives that are pleasing to God?

Now as we end “*My Tribute*,” any songwriter will tell you that any great song has to have a powerful chorus, and this chorus is one of the best ever! Crouch uses the famous hymn “*To God Be the Glory*,” and here is what he says, in the chorus:

To God be the glory,  
To God be the glory,  
To God be the glory,  
For the things He has done.

With His blood He has saved me;  
With His power He has raised me;  
To God be the glory  
For the things He has done.

In this—one of the most resounding choruses in the history of modern gospel music, he answers the question, why do we live a life, why do we strive to live a life, that is pleasing to God? Because in our lives, in life, in all of history, to God goes the glory. Amen and thanks be to God.

***[Concert concludes with Chancel Choir singing “The Tribute by Andrae Crouch”]***

**Rev. Mark Hovermale — Benediction and Blessing**

May we go forth from this place living a life that is pleasing to God. And may the blessing of God, the Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit be on you and yours, today and forever more. Amen.

***“My Tribute”* by Andrae Crouch**

[Verse]

How can I say thanks  
For the things You have done for me?  
Things so undeserved  
Yet You gave to prove Your love for me;  
The voices of a million angels  
Could not express my gratitude.  
All that I am and ever hope to be;  
I owe it all to Thee.

[Chorus 1]

To God be the glory,  
To God be the glory,  
To God be the glory,  
For the things He has done.

[Chorus 2]

With His blood He has saved me;  
With His power He has raised me;  
To God be the glory  
For the things He has done.

[Bridge]

Just let me live my life;  
Let it be pleasing, Lord, to Thee.  
And if I gain any praise,  
Let it go to Calvary.

[Chorus 2]