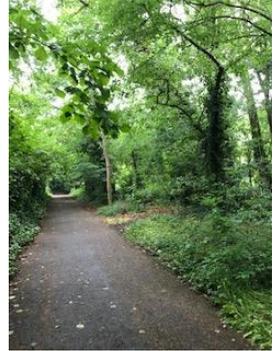


Worship for 28 June 2020

Introduction & welcome

Welcome to you all to our Sunday morning worship for the Cadbury Pastorate. We are still in lockdown but the situation is easing for some people and places are opening even if churches are not open for worship. Today we should have had our worship led by Rev Ian Thornley a retired Baptist minister and I invited him to contribute to this worship and he sent me a reflection which you can read or watch later so my thanks go to him.



Let us pray.

We thank you God, that you have spoken to people of faith at many times and in various ways, and that in Jesus, your living word, you have revealed yourself among us. We come longing once more to know your presence and to hear your word. We come eager to follow Jesus. We rejoice you are always with us as we gather in spirit in his name. Amen

Hymn: Take my life

Prayer

Almighty and loving God, we would bring you our praise, we would offer you our worship, we would open to you our hearts, we would tell of all you mean to us, we would proclaim your name in a way that does justice to your greatness.

Loving God, we come to worship you in the conviction that you are here with us now, that you are by our side always wherever we are and that you hold all things and all people in your hands. As we reach out to you, reach out to us we pray, and fill every moment of every day with the light of your love and the peace of your presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Reading: Philippians 3: 12-16

Our next hymn has been written especially by John Bell of the Iona Community for our time in lockdown and is encouraging us to think of the future when we can worship together again in person

Hymn John Bell hymn

<https://www.facebook.com/IonaCommunity/videos/1772233066234213>

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We Will Meet When the Danger Is Over

John L Bell (C) Wild Goose Resource Group, The Iona Community

We will meet when the danger is over,
we will meet when the sad days are over;
we will meet sitting closely together
and be glad our tomorrow has come.

We will join to give thanks and sing gladly,
we will join to break bread and share wine;
and the peace that we pass to each other
will more than a casual sign.

So let's make with each other a promise
that when we've all come through is behind,
we will share what we missed and find meaning
in the things that once troubled our mind.

Until then may we always discover
faith and love to determine our way.
That's our hope and God's will and our calling
for our lives and for every new day.

Reflection

I thought it would be good just to share a few thoughts from the apostle Paul in the book of Philippians. The letter is very positive. It is about moving forward. Paul says in Philippians 3 "One thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus."

The apostle Paul begins by saying that we have priorities in the Christian life and there is just one thing 'pressing on'. David in Psalm 27 has the same thought in mind when he says there is just one thing he wants and that is to dwell in the house of God forever. Then, we know, in the story of Mary and Martha that Mary had just one thought, she just wanted to sit at the feet of Jesus. Paul has just one thing as well, he wants his life to be lived for the glory of God and then to be lived for the blessing and benefit of others. Two things together, the glory of God and the blessing of others.

Quite naturally coming to our minds is the question "how do I do that?" It sounds a very brilliant thing to do but "how do I do it?" Paul says we do it by just seeing three simple things: first of all, I must let go of the past, forgetting what is behind; then I must reach for the future; and I must press on for it.

The picture I'm going to use to explain it is that of running for the bus.



I'm sure we've all had that experience when we have been going somewhere, walking along the street and suddenly the bus has come and stopped at the bus stop and we have been a little way off. We don't want to miss it, so we

begin running. The apostle Paul says at that point you can't start thinking about "Oh, I would have been at the bus stop already if only I'd done this and if only I'd not done that." - We have got to let that go. This does not mean we can't reminisce about the past, which we can, and I'm sure we all do, but we don't live in it, and we don't let it stop us achieving what we're seeking to do now. So letting go and forgetting, but then we must also strain forward.

The idea of straining forward is to stretch forward, to do our best, to keep on going. Sometimes when we're running for the bus we get a stitch but we keep on going. We might get a little bit out of breath but we keep on going. We can think of ourselves as stretching and reaching for something we really want from the top shelf in the kitchen. We

know we might have to get a little step, we might have to help ourselves up, but we've got to do something. What the apostle Paul is saying is this, "no matter what, there is more to learn and there is more to receive, keep on going." You don't know it, but God is the driver of that bus and He is not going to leave without you. Somehow we haven't caught on to that fact, so we must keep stretching forward and reaching forward.

Then also 'pressing on'. This means to run after something as if it was getting away, which inspired me with the idea of running for the bus. Now the interesting thing is this, everyone who gets to the bus stop and gets on the bus gets the same prize, we get the journey. Not just those who were there first, nor just those who were very well organised and got to the stop and were there five minutes early, but even those of us who have been running and running and we thought we were late and we thought we'd never get there, we still get the same prize as everybody else. It is not the winning but the getting to the place required, and that's what the apostle Paul is saying here in Philippians. It is not whether you're beating somebody else nor whether you're better or worse than someone else, nor is it comparing yourself to the saints of the past. It is this, do you know - do you really know the Lord Jesus Christ? He is the place to get to. Get to him and you will fulfil your destiny and purpose. He is like the bus by the bus stop so keep on going, don't let the things in the past hinder you, strain forward, stretch forward and keep on pressing on.

God is making a promise to you in these verses. With your faith in Christ, you will fulfil your purpose and destiny. You will move forward, you will keep on going. Look to Jesus. Jesus is both the author and the finisher of our faith.

Let us commit that to the Lord in prayer.

Our God and Father, how we thank you that you have provided everything we need. You have provided everything we need in Jesus. Help us Lord, to keep on going to keep on moving forward and to discover you. For this we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

May the blessing of God be with you today and forever. Amen

Prayer for all

Sovereign God, we pray for the weak and vulnerable in our world, those who feel powerless in the face of the massive problems that confront them. We pray for the poor, the hungry, the diseased and the dying. We pray for the oppressed, the exploited, the abused and the tortured. We pray for the frightened, the lonely, the hurt and the depressed. We pray for those who live in lands racked by tension, those who face famine and starvation, those who are unemployed and those who are homeless.

Lord we have expressed a special concern for the bruised, the needy and the weak of the world. May that concern bring strength to all in such need and may it inspire people everywhere to work for a more just society standing up for the needy and oppressed, and working for that time when there will be an end to suffering, mourning and pain, that time when your kingdom will come and your will be done. Let us in a moment of silence bring to God our personal concerns and for those of the world....

Help of the helpless, reach out to strengthen and support, in the name of Christ. Amen.

Let us join together in the words of the Lord's Prayer

Hymn: In my life be glorified

Blessing

May the world continue to surprise us, love continue to astonish us, life continue to captivate us, faith continue to sustain us, and may God go with us always, now and for evermore. Amen