

# Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



**Opening Prayer:** Father God you reveal yourself supremely in Jesus, showing us such love and demonstrating the way to live. Forgive us for the times we have lived in the wrong way. Thank you for the forgiveness offered through Jesus, by his death. Help us to receive your forgiveness and living with eyes fixed upon you, walk forwards in the power of your Spirit and to the praise of your glory. **Amen**

### **Song:**

Who breaks the power of sin and darkness?

Whose love is mighty and so much stronger?

The King of glory, the King above all kings

Who shakes the whole earth with holy thunder?

And leaves us breathless in awe and wonder?

The King of glory, the King above all kings

*This is amazing grace*

*This is unfailing love*

*That You would take my place*

*That You would bear my cross*

*You laid down Your life*

*That I would be set free*

*Oh, Jesus, I sing for*

*All that You've done for me*

Who brings our chaos back into order?

Who makes the orphans a son and daughter?

The King of glory, the King of glory

Who rules the nations with truth and justice

Shines like the sun in all of its brilliance

The King of glory, the King above all kings

*This is amazing grace*

(Bridge) Worthy is the Lamb who was slain

Worthy is the King who conquered the grave. (rpt)

*This is amazing grace.*

**Read:** Colossians 3:12-17

**Full of Jesus Christ.** *A summary of the talk given by Lorna Littlewood.*

How does your identity impact the way that you live? In Colossians 3:12, Paul reminds us of our identity as God's people; we are chosen, holy and dearly loved. In response, Paul invites us to clothe ourselves in a way that claims that identity.

When you see a woman wearing a wedding dress, you can be fairly confident of some aspects of her identity; she is chosen and dearly loved by her husband. By putting on her wedding dress, she claims that identity and communicates it to the world around her.



In the same way, as the bride of Christ, we are invited to clothe ourselves not with a physical wedding dress, but with character clothing that claims our identity as

people who are chosen, holy and dearly loved by God.

These character clothes don't earn our salvation for us, just as a man hopefully already loves his wife before he sees us in a wedding dress, God has already given us our identity before we are clothed in these characteristics. Because he already loves us, he considers us worthy of sacrifice – the sacrifice of his son on the cross.



So, in understanding this identity as someone who is so dearly loved by God that he is willing to die for us, why would we not want to claim that identity by clothing ourselves as Paul describes?

In the last two weeks, we've learnt about the attitudes and behaviours that are the metaphorical equivalent of turning up to our wedding day clothed in ripped, muddy and

inappropriate clothes; it communicates something of our attitude to our identity. Paul invites us to something much more beautiful:

*“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”*



We may not have this outfit all sorted yet. This list of examples that Paul gives us may not be an accurate

description of us yet. But just as a bride spends time and effort preparing her outfit for her wedding day, we are in a process of preparing for our wedding day with Christ. One day we will be united with him in all fullness and it will be glorious. Until that day we are getting ready – starting to clothe ourselves as Paul describes.

God already knows us in our mess and mistakes, and he loves us anyway, but as we look forward to that day, let’s invest our time and effort into our preparations. You may like to take some time to ask God which of the characteristics in Paul’s list he wants you to focus on practicing this week. You may like to look for opportunities to practice compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, forgiveness and love.

You are chosen, holy and dearly loved by God himself. How will you respond to that identity?

**Prayers:** *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends.
- Pray for the Church.

**Collect: The Third Sunday of Lent.** Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**



**The Lord's Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Blessing** to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

**The Notices:** The building is still closed for services, but we are currently hoping we might return to (ticketed and socially distanced) services for Easter Sunday.

If you know of others who would like to receive this, or you would rather not receive it; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends, or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.

