

Sunday 7th February 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: Almighty God, through Jesus you have created all things and hold all things together. You alone are worthy of all praise, honour, and worship. We thank you for your majestic power and for your extraordinary kindness, that you would care for us. Help us acknowledge our need of you, receive your love, and live lives of worship to you this day. **Amen**

Song:

Beyond this lifetime,
Beyond this darkness there's light.
Your cross is shining,
So people open your eyes.

*The cross stands above it all
Burning bright in this life
The cross towers over it all
One hope, one Deliverer
Saviour reigning high above it all
Above it all*

These chains are breaking
Your love is shaking us free
A great awakening
This world will finally see

The cross stands...

Bridge: Christ has overcome.
It is finished, He has won.
Christ has overcome.
We're standing strong.

The cross stands...



Read: Colossians 1:24 – 2:5

Fully Known by Christ Jesus. A summary of the talk given by Jonathan Rooke.

I'm on a treasure hunt. Do you want to come along?

The treasure is the riches of maturity in Christ and the mystery we have to solve is Who is Christ? I think the key question Jesus asks everyone is 'Who do you say I am?' That's the mystery we have to solve. How do we find out?

Paul tells us in his letter to the young church that he wants the recently converted Christians who live in the town of Colossae to grow up – to mature in Christ. They already understand that Jesus is sent by God to bring His love to all the world. They know that Jesus died, he rose from death and when he did that Jesus released the beautiful Holy Spirit, a beautiful power, into the world and he made a new agreement, a new covenant, telling how we can live with God and each other. It was a renewed view of who God is and what it means to be loved by God.

In Colossae, back in 55AD, Paul was keen to protect the young Christians from what he called false teachings. That is, any teaching that claimed it had the answer to the mystery of things, - like who they were, what they were here for, and what their life meant. It was false teaching if it

claimed the answer could be found outside the Christian Gospel. Stay on the path, says Paul. Don't get lured into the forest undergrowth.

The thing is, the meaning of life is a secret. But because of Jesus, it is now an open secret. Paul says to them, look... the answer to the mystery of the secret is Jesus. You don't have to look outside of him. He is God in the world come to bring a new life – a new age. His purpose is to draw all the world into the love of God. The only route to maturity is hunting for the treasures of Christ.

Paul encourages them.

And us.

Search as individuals.

Search as a whole body together.

But search.

We are fully known by Christ. Paul assures the Colossae Christians that Christ dwells in them. And that means he dwells in us too. That gives us confidence and knowing this enables us to deal with the challenges we have. But Paul is saying Jesus wants us to really know him too. He wants depth with us as individuals and as a whole community.

Do you think if we want to know who Jesus is, to mature with him, then we probably need to ask him questions? He seems to like people asking him questions in the gospels. What questions have you asked Jesus

recently? What questions would you like to ask him?

I think we need to ask questions like – “Who is Jesus? What is he like? Where is he in this situation that we find ourselves? What has Jesus done for us in our lives recently or in the past? How can we express gratitude in our worship and our daily lives?”

Finding answers to who Christ is, perhaps, is less like solving a puzzle and more like mining. We extract and reveal answers to the mystery.

To solve the mystery and mature we can ‘go mining’ in the Bible, go to God in prayer, or ask God questions as we are going about our daily business. We can be confident if we listen, with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, God will show us something interesting, maybe beautiful about himself. Sometimes, he shows us something perplexing, but that is fine. Paul uses the word sometimes translated as wrestling to describe asking questions and he says on our treasure hunt we need effort and diligence- like an athlete – that is how we mature, how we grow. When we do this, Paul seems to say, we will find the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

If we are not growing, then we are resting in what we already know about who Jesus is? Sometimes it is



good to rest. Sometimes we know there is a time to move on.

To deepen.

To grow.

To mature.

Paul says we need the whole body of our church to reveal the mystery. We need fellowship with other Christian treasure hunters because being a Christian, sooner or later, is a team sport. We need each other. Sometimes its bumpy together because we don't see everything the same way, but it's always growth, sharing what we think the answers are so far to Christ's question – ‘Who do you say I am?’

I think if we ask him, Jesus will tell us what we want to know. After all, he fully knows us and he wants us to more fully know him

What do you think?

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 the nations, their leaders, and peoples; pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends
- Pray for the Church

Collect: The Second Sunday before Lent: Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, 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: 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.

