

Sunday 14th 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: Heavenly Father you are wise, good, mighty and loving beyond our comprehension. Thank you that you come to us in Jesus and, today, your Holy Spirit. Forgive us for our lack of belief, of trust and failure to follow you completely. Help us receive your forgiveness, won for us on the cross, and walk forwards in worship, in the fulness of your grace and the power of your Spirit.

Amen

Song:

I cast my mind to Calvary
Where Jesus bled and died for me.
I see His wounds, His hands, His feet.
My Saviour on that cursed tree

His body bound and drenched in tears
They laid Him down in Joseph's tomb.
The entrance sealed by heavy stone
Messiah still and all alone

*O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise His name forever more
For endless days we will sing Your
praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God*

Then on the third at break of dawn,
The Son of heaven rose again.
O trampled death where is your sting?
The angels roar for Christ the King

O praise the name...

He shall return in robes of white,
The blazing Son shall pierce the night.
And I will rise among the saints,
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face

O praise the name...

Read: Colossians 2:6-15

Following Christ Jesus. A summary of the talk given by Howard Wright.

There is so much in this passage today, but I want to focus on our living and thinking.

Today is Valentine's day. Paul and Timothy's advice in verses six and seven could be applied to a romantic relationship. In other words, be faithful, invest in the person you're with, and be thankful.

The whole Bible, especially in the prophets, speaks of the people of God as his bride and is not afraid to use romantic language in referring to God's love for us and the marriage commitment to challenge us to faithfulness.

The relationships into which we invest are those which are mutual, a partnership of blessing. We are not required to stay in relationships that place us in danger physically or emotionally with an abusive partner – do seek help if this is your situation.

Ironically, Jesus offers himself constantly to us, despite our behaviour which could be considered as abusive to him! Jesus remains in control and cannot be hurt, any more than he has on the cross by our rejection and unfaithfulness – but the prophets speak of the grieving God does over us (See Hosea!).

Like Jane and Jonathan spoke of in last couple of weeks' videos, we are to live

in relationship and to work at deepening this relationship, being rooted, seeking God, asking questions.

Paul and Timothy emphasise thankfulness, an attitude of gratitude, throughout the letter and here write that this thankfulness needs to overflow.

Even the Harvard Medical School website has this quote: *In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.*

For some of us thankfulness seems to come easily, for others, we may have to work at it – we might need to practice. Someone mentioned to me recently how they find the teaspoon, (tsp), prayers work so well for them: thanks – sorry – please. I often write my prayers down and I try to practice beginning with, 'Thank You Father...'

There is, of course, a difference between thankfulness and saying, 'thank you'. We've all encountered the child who's been schooled to say thank you, but who squeezes it through gritted teeth. But we can practice that attitude of gratitude, seeking God, the good and joy in each

day and living with thankfulness to our heavenly Father.

From verse eight to fifteen we move to thinking. We are once again reminded of the supremacy of Christ Jesus, but here, in demolishing all other philosophies, world views and worldly ideas.

The types of ideas around then and now include:

- It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.
- All religions lead to God in the end, they're just different paths up the same mountain.
- Follow these rules, live this way and you qualify for 'heaven'.
- There is no God.

Paul and Timothy, point to the historical fact of Jesus, the man who is God, who has died for our sins and who is risen from the dead. Lord Darling, a former Lord Chief Justice of England declared: *'In its favour as a living truth there exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual, and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in the verdict that the resurrection story is true.'*

Here and in the whole letter, it is pointed out that Jesus is unique. There is clarity now about our future – a relationship with God forever – and clarity about how to obtain this, it is by Jesus and his death, not choosing our

own route or rules, but, again, by relationship.

Sincerity is no use here; we can be sincerely wrong! Feelings will not change the facts, we can be misled by our feelings, which is why Paul and Timothy are at such pains to stress again and again, it's about the person of Jesus, the revelation of God, as recorded by reliable witnesses for us today in our scriptures, the Old and New Testament of the Bible.

All other opinions and ideas must submit to this and, this leads us to the final verse of our passage: 'And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.'

The uniqueness and supremacy of Christ above all human ideas, is dramatically illustrated here. The cross of Christ is, as said in 1 Corinthians, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to all others. But the cross is the victory, as verified by the resurrection. Death and sin are defeated, and along with all the other powers, authorities, clever ideas, whims, and thoughts, utterly humiliated.

None can stand up to the wisdom and truth of Jesus and the cross. There is one Saviour and Lord, as Peter said in Acts 4, one name by which we must be saved, and his name is Jesus. There is one judge of all deeds and thoughts, one who will rule and reign with

justice, and his name is Jesus, as Paul preaches in Acts 17. Every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, as Philippians 2 reminds us.

And this most glorious Saviour, Judge and King, invites us to live with him – we are fools if we accept anything less.



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 Sunday before Lent: Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; 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: 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.

0800 804 8044
DailyHOPE
A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers