

Sunday 19th July 2020

The paper-version Service



For now, we cannot meet in the building – but the church is still open!

All of our services are online www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk but this weekly sheet captures our Sunday service for those without internet.

To Begin: Find a Bible. If safe, perhaps light a candle. Find a comfortable place 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 modern song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



Opening Prayer: God of love, thank you that you welcome us into your family. We are not worthy to be called your children, and we confess our failure to you. Thank you that you forgive us, and that through Jesus you offer us new life and begin to transform us by your Holy Spirit. Help us to respond to you today, become more like you, living to your praise and glory, loving you, loving our neighbour, and inviting others into your love. **Amen**

Song:

All these pieces
Broken and scattered
In mercy gathered
Mended and whole
Empty-handed
But not forsaken
I've been set free
I've been set free

*Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
But now I'm found
Was blind but now I see*

*Oh, I can see it now
Oh, I can see the love in Your eyes
Laying yourself down
Raising up the broken to life*

You take our failure
You take our weakness
You set Your treasure
In jars of clay
So take this heart, Lord
I'll be Your vessel
The world to see
Your life in me

Read: Ephesians 6:10-24

Living in the Spirit (a summary of the talk given by Rev Howard Wright)

This is the Final Sermon in our Ephesians series. We have been reminded of the awesome nature of God and the extravagant and literally, life-changing gift of salvation – an invitation into family and family business. We have been challenged about the values and standards of this new family, and the impact on relationships.



Finally, in our text today, we are reminded that there is still work to be done, for there is a battle being fought for our souls, and the lives and souls of others. There are spiritual powers; as named here, 'the devil' and 'rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm'. There are both angels, God's servants for good, and demons, fallen angels, led by the devil or Satan, and who are set on destruction.

The devil is often portrayed in comic terms, but it is no laughing business. Jesus believed in and 'battled' these spiritual powers and we must too.

We find temptations snare us, fear overcomes us, prayer is difficult, we

struggle to find time to read the Bible, we are distracted from and forget Jesus, others annoy us and are hard to love and even harder to forgive, and it does not come easy to share Jesus.

This is a battle for our souls and eternal future but it is not a battle against flesh and blood. Peter tells us, '*Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith*' (1 Peter 5:8-9).

God, through Jesus is triumphant, in his resurrection victory he humiliated death and demons: '*he led captives in his train*' (Ephesians 4:8). We must be alert, but death and Satan are defeated, the war for our lives is won for Christ, Christ is the King, but there are some battles still to be fought. So how do we stand, staying alert and protect ourselves? We put on these things:

The Belt of Truth – Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6), do we feed on this truth, or allow the messages of our world, our past, the media and marketeers to tell us what to believe about God, future hope and ourselves. The Gospel of Jesus, and Jesus himself is true! Fix this around your waist, and when doubts about God, yourself, or the world come – stand!

The Breastplate of Righteousness – one of the biggest lies of Satan is that

we are never good enough. This is a half-truth! We are not good enough for God, but because of Jesus and the grace of God, we are made righteous – see Psalm 103:12.

The Gospel of Peace Shoes –

Regardless of what we face, including Covid-19, we can stand certain in the peace of God. With our feet secure in the certainty of the present and future hope, we need not be unsettled or knocked off-course. And we can take this peace to others, through conversations.

The Shield of Faith – Belief in Jesus and the resurrection extinguishes all the doubts, fears and accusations that are shot at us. We have faith in a God who has raised the dead, and we know his love which casts out all fear.

The Helmet of Salvation – Protection for our minds: by application of the truth of Jesus we are committing to being ‘made new in the attitude of your minds.’ (Ephesians 4:23)

The Sword of the Spirit – The Word of God which in Hebrews is described as a two-edged sword. It is sharp, slicing open the false words and ideas, vanquishing evil and creating space for the Kingdom of peace to flourish.

Prayer in the Spirit – Though not listed as ‘armour’, but perhaps a cloak that wraps over it and keeps us warm is prayer. Read verses 18-20 again. We are encouraged to pray always, all sorts, and persevere. The challenge is

we pray sometimes, in some ways and give up quickly!

How can we apply these things today? In the film *Karate Kid*, is the iconic moment when the ‘kid’ wanting to be taught karate complains that all he is doing are chores, such as polishing a car: ‘wax-on’ and ‘wax-off’. His elderly teacher shows him how by completing simple disciplines he has equipped his body with the necessary movements for mastering karate.

We have been given the simple disciplines of prayer, studying the Bible and loving each other. As we do these things, we strengthen our souls, and equip ourselves for the battle ahead.

So, let us be alert to the work of the evil one diverting us from loving God and neighbour and our task of making disciples. And let us look to God and allow him to feed and sustain us with his armour.

Read verse 23 as a prayer for yourself and others.



Prayers: I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV)



- Pray for the day ahead and its tasks
- Pray for the nations
- Pray for organisations
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends
- Pray for the Church

Collect for 5th after Trinity: Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 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'd like to receive this, or you'd 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.

The Church is open for those who would like to use the space for private prayer. Clear instructions are displayed on how to make use of the church safely.

We cannot yet meet for services, but our PCC is looking at starting a simple Sunday service from August. We will keep you informed.

