

Sunday 20th September 2020

The paper-version Service

***The church is meeting on paper, online
and on Sunday at 9.30am in the Building***



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: Father God, thank you that you are Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, glorious in majesty. We acknowledge our lack of goodness before the light of your holiness. Thank you that you come to us in love and through the cross of Christ offer us forgiveness. And thank you that you come to us in the power of the Holy Spirit to equip us for your service. Help us to hear your word today and put it into practice. **Amen**

Song:

At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light
And the burden of my soul rolled away
It was there by faith I received my sight
Now no longer I but Christ in me

O how endless the hope
O how empty the grave
And the joy of a stone rolled away
It is there by grace I am raised to life
Now no longer I but Christ in me

I will run to the cross...

*I will run to the cross
Where You opened up my eyes
I will sing of the love that saved me
I will bow in the place
Where Your death became my life
I will run, I will run to the cross*

It is no longer I
It is Christ who lives in me
Christ who lives in me
Christ who lives in me

Read: Luke 6:17-36

How do we make it? (A summary of the talk given by Nigel Pink).

The Great Commission commands the making of disciples and in this passage, Jesus shows us where to start, with ourselves - by making some decisions and thereby renewing our thinking:

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

The setting of the reading from Luke is the Sermon on the Plain. Jesus has been praying all night on a mountain with his twelve disciples (listed for the first time in Luke's account); then they descend to a 'level place' and while others flock to hear his words, Jesus' teaching is aimed squarely at his disciples (and that includes us!)

Firstly, Jesus targets our value system. Jesus explains that his disciples must overhaul our thinking on 'worth'.

GODLY VALUES

Jesus presents four beatitudes (or blessings) and four correlative woes. Both sets are transpositional in nature, inverting and contrasting what the world esteems with what God considers as worthy.

Blessed translates *makarios* and the Greek word denotes an enviable or

'fortunate' state through the extension of God's favour. While the consequence of blessing is outworked in eternity...

'God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.' (Revelation 21:4)

... there is a down payment in right away (Paul experienced peace despite all the hardship he lists in 2 Corinthians 11).

So, let us briefly examine the four value sets.

Being Poor – Jesus neither espouses poverty as enviable, nor is he advocating ascetism. This about what we treasure; Jesus teaches:

'No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.' (Matthew 6:24)

Mammon means any form of worldly treasure, and that might certainly include material wealth:

'Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.' (Matthew 19:23-24)

Hunger – this is not advocating starvation and famine! This is about hungering for the right things and trusting divine providence. Do we crave God’s Word and desire His Kingdom? Jesus teaches this:

...do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles [here meaning the ungodly] seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
(Matthew 6:31-33)

Lamenting – How can any sane person suggest that grieving is a good thing? But in God’s economy, it is not only desirable, but vital. The disciple that does not grieve is no true disciple and Jesus assures them that they will weep in eternity.

This ‘woe’ concerns the woeful state of our heart. We weep that God had to subject his Son to death that we might be redeemed; we lament that as a result of sin, there is cruelty, injustice, disease and death (Jesus wept before the tomb of his dead friend Lazarus, even in the knowledge that he would revive him). We grieve that although our faith credits us righteousness, we daily still fall short of God’s glory and add to the sum total of sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
(1 John 1:8)

Renown – Jesus was reviled and yet triumphed, and he is clear that if we declare ourselves his disciples that *will* be our fate – in rejecting what the world values, we open ourselves to being mocked and despised. Jesus warns us to not be people-pleasers, but set out to please God.

GODLY LOVE

Having told his disciples that they must reset their values, he begins on the operating mode: love. And here love is not an emotion but a decision. Loving your enemies is necessarily an act of the will. If you are well-disposed towards someone, then they cease to be your enemy, even if they choose to be yours and seek to damage you.

This is the meaning of offering the other cheek. You will suffer hurt and humiliation. Jesus is speaking about doing good towards people that would do you harm. And this is to our cost in the short term; e.g. when we lend and do not expect any return, in other words, let people steal from you! Thus, Jesus recalibrates the natural law of reciprocity with one based on the commandment to love others as we love ourselves.

Prayers: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 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 for 15th after Trinity: God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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: 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.

Church Services: Sunday 9.30am with safety measures in place.

APCM: Our annual meeting will be held on Tuesday 13th October, we are hoping to meet in the building with online access. We will be electing new churchwardens, Deanery Synod Reps and PCC members. Please be praying for those God is calling – perhaps yourself!

If you're not sure whether you're on our **Electoral Roll**, please contact Matt.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers