

# Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## The paper-version Service

*The church is meeting on paper and online*

All of our services are online [www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk](http://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 love us, hear us, and receive us. Help us to respond in love, listening, and receiving. Forgive us when we fall short and help us to respond in worship, walking forwards in your company, and sharing your presence and peace with all whom we come into contact. In the name of Jesus and for the glory of your name we pray. **Amen**

### **Song:**

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made.  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
and hear the brook and feel the gently breeze

*Then sings my soul...*

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in  
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin

*Then sings my soul...*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then shall I bow with humble adoration,  
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art

*Then sings my soul...*

**Read:** Luke 23:44-56

***Can Others Join In?*** (A summary of the talk given by Roy Lewis)

Do you remember the 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ*? It was quite a remarkable film which was a great box office success; but it was also controversial.

Its depiction of the death of Jesus was graphic and shocking! One film critic of the time wrote that 100 or minutes or more were concerned with the details of the torture and death of Jesus. He continued "This is the most violent film I have ever seen!"

The Gospel writers, however, contrast greatly to the film script writer as they wrote with brief simplicity and dignity of the Lord's suffering and death.

This is how Luke succinctly put it: - "When they were come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him". 23:33.

What a contrast to the film!

The Gospel writers seem to have had this approach:-

- They told us all we need to know.
- They excluded all we did NOT need to know.

Luke writes firstly about the central person, Jesus, his death and its purpose.

- By noon, the land was covered in darkness.

➤ The curtain, in the Temple at Jerusalem was torn in two. signifying it was the work of God not men.

➤ Jesus cried with a LOUD VOICE "Into your hands I commend my spirit!" This was not a defeatist cry, but one of triumph, confidence and victory; His work was accomplished.

Around the cross were many people; but it is also interesting there were many who were not there – including most of His disciples.

What can we learn from Luke's account of those who witnessed the event and how it affected them?

1. The centurion, a man in authority who had witnessed many such executions; but this man was no ordinary, justice deserving criminal. "Surely this was a righteous man" he said. It can also be translated "Certainly, this man was innocent!"
2. The "Crowd"; they had come to witness the spectacle and when it was over, they went beating their breasts. Probably a cultural response, but it seems they were there bizarrely to watch such a shocking sight,
3. All those who knew Him, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, and they stood at a distance – watching. They stayed and did not leave when it was "over!" We will come back to them in a moment.
4. Finally Joseph, a man from Arimathea. What does the Bible say about him?
  - He was a rich man.

- He was a member of the influential Jewish Council, who were among those who tried Jesus, but did not agree with their judgment.
- He was a secret disciple for fear of the Jews.

Until now he had not appeared to be public with his faith as a follower of Jesus, but spoke for Him when it was necessary.

Now His master had died, alone, the death of a common criminal. He went to Pilate to plead for the privilege of taking the body of Jesus from the Cross, carry Him and place Him in Joseph's very own grave which he had purchased for his own burial. After a life time of being in the background as a follower of Jesus he now stepped into to breach to publicly honour his Lord.

Everyone who has come or will come to the Cross of Jesus, must and does make a response. Whether it was 2,000 years ago when physically present, or now, in mind and in spirit. The cross of Jesus challenges us with an unavoidable response.

With which of the people who were physically present that day do you identify?

- The centurion who paid a wonderful compliment, that he would have never said of any other executed criminal "He was a

righteous man, and certainly He was innocent. You may acknowledge Him, even admire Him as a good, even great man; but maybe no more than that?

- The crowd who came to watch a "spectacle" then went their own way, That was an active response, to walk away from the Cross and the suffering Saviour?

- Nicodemus, until now, a secret follower because of his fear of the Jews, but now making an open declaration through his action of his commitment to Jesus, and sacrificially giving Him his own burial place?

- These amazing women; many had followed Him from Galilee; they had supported Him out of their means; they went home and prepared spices to anoint His body – and among them was His very own mother, Mary.

The Cross inevitably demands a response, and Nicodemus with those women were such amazing models.

Finally, words of an old hymn that I love: -

To Thee, Thou bleeding Lamb, I all things owe— All that I have, and am, and all I know. All that I have is now no longer mine, And I am not mine own; Lord, I am Thine.

Charles Mudie 1872

**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)



- 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

**Second Sunday before advent:** Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all: govern the hearts and minds of those in authority, and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to his just and gentle rule; 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.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers