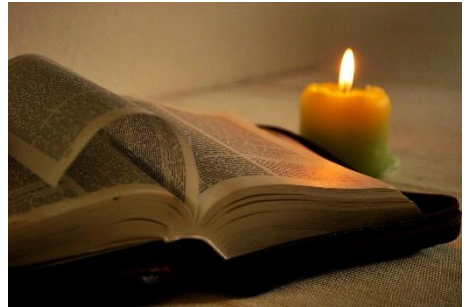


Sunday 17th January 2021

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: Father God, we ask you to fill us with the knowledge of your will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. That we might live a life worthy of you: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in knowledge of you, and being strengthened with all power according to your glorious might. **Amen**

Song:

Worthy of every song we could ever sing.

Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring.

Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.

We live for you.

Jesus, the name above every other name.

Jesus, the only one who could save.
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.

We live for you; we live for you,

*Holy, there is no one like you.
There is none besides you.*

*Open up my eyes in wonder.
Show me who you are and fill me
With your heart and lead me
In your love to those around me.*

Worthy, worthy of every song...

Jesus, the name...

Holy, there is no one like you...

Bridge:

And I will build my life upon your love, it is a firm foundation
And I will put my trust in you alone
And I will not be shaken. (Rpt)

Holy, there is no one like you...

Read: Colossians 1:1-8.

Fruitfulness for Christ. A summary of the talk given by Howard Wright.

In the first few verses last week we heard how Paul and Timothy were thankful to hear of the faith of the Colossian Christians. This week we read what Paul and Timothy are asking God for their sisters and brothers.

What they write teaches us what we might pray for others and for ourselves.

Read verse 9. I suspect that what follows is what we'd expect, but this doesn't lessen its importance or power.

Firstly, Paul and Timothy pray that God would fill them with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding of the Spirit.

In other words, we pray that you might truly, completely and utterly get who God is and what God has done, is doing and will do.

The thing about God, is he is Almighty – do we hear this – All Mighty. The theological word is omnipotence, and this is just one of his qualities!

Again, read as Paul and Timothy will launch into in verses 15-17.

In him all things hold together. God in Christ is the prime mover, the originator and sustainer of all life, power, past present and future.

Are we grasping God? The God who is completely beyond our understanding, who yet, comes to us in Jesus – who, if we've seen him, we've seen the Father!

Tragically our culture, our society does not, for the most part, get God. Like goldfish swimming around a glass bowl, we imagine we're in a locked in world with no other help except our own cleverness and the currently heralded messiah, science and its vaccines.

There's a joke about a scientist who claims to be able to create life and confronts God about this, telling him we no longer need him. God responds with a request for a demonstration of how the scientist has done this without him. The scientist agrees and bends down to scoop up a handful of earth. 'Whoa!' says God, 'Get your own dirt.'



We can not yet create life, but even if we could we'd still need the matter that God created from nothing. And we'd be using the physical bodies

and intelligence gifted by God in the first place.

Now thank God for scientists, and the superb work they have done producing vaccines, and pray God they work.

But even if they don't, God is still God, he is big enough and trustworthy. Pray that we and all Christians rise-up completely and utterly understanding who God is, and what God has done, is doing and will do.

This leads to the second request in the prayers of Paul and Timothy. Read verses 10-12.

There's a lot in this but for me it's summed up in being powerfully fruitful. This fruitfulness is seen in every good work and, in a repeat of the opening, a growing knowledge of God.

'Good works' as demonstrated by disciples of Jesus are always summed up in love for God and for neighbour.

Read chapter 3:12-14 and Galatians 5:22-23

What 'work' does this result in? As we considered last term in our apprenticeship series, *Carpenter Seeks Joiners*, it looks like Jesus, someone who shares life, healing, joy and hope with others in the context of a broken world and broken lives needing God's grace.

What does it look like in a pandemic? It looks like giving time for family, friends, neighbours, colleagues. Paul was locked down, literally, but he, with Timothy, made time to pray for, and write to, those he'd never even met.

Might we find time for praying for and loving others, being generous with our resources, of time, energy, and money, bringing hope, healing, and joy.

Paul and Timothy pray also for growing knowledge. So important is knowledge that it gets prayed twice.

They pray for knowledge for the Colossians that, they are pains through the letter to point out, are based upon the historical fact of Jesus; the man, who physically lived, died, and rose again, proving he is also God.

Additionally, it's clear that this knowledge is not an interesting reflection but inspiration for action.

Finally, this prayer is prayed in joyful confidence at all that God has achieved through Jesus. Read verses 11-13.

And we are back to the beginning. It's a knowledge of God which gives us this confidence to pray with passion and joy – certain of a God who is trustworthy, who is more than big enough.

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

Second Sunday of Epiphany: Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; 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: Sadly, for the safety of everybody and following advice from the bishops, we have suspended our Sunday worship once again. We hope to re-open once risk allows.

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.

