

# Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> 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:** Almighty God, you know our hearts, yet still love us. Forgive us for our lack of love, forgive us for the times we have looked upon the wrong things. Thank you that forgiveness is possible through Jesus, by his death upon the cross. Help us receive your forgiveness and walk forwards with eyes fixed upon you, and in the power of your Spirit live lives that declare your glory. **Amen**

### **Song:**

In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease  
My Comforter, my All in All  
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless babe.  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones He came to save  
Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied  
For every sin on Him was laid  
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,  
Light of the world by darkness slain:  
Then bursting forth in glorious day  
Up from the grave He rose again  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

**Read:** Colossians 3:1-11

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

We are now at chapter 3 in our look through this letter by Paul and Timothy to the Christians in Colossae.

Last week, Jonathan, reminded us that we are loved and nothing we can do will make God love us more or love us less. We cannot earn God's favour; we are already beloved children of the King. So, follow Jesus, not these rituals, ideas, philosophies, or any other teachings, just focus on Jesus and invest in this relationship.

This week, we continue this theme and look at the how we might avoid other diversions to knowing Jesus and living as Kingdom people.

In chapter 2:20 we read, 'you have died with Christ', now Paul and Timothy begin this section with '...you have been raised with Christ'.

We are people of new life, risen people, heavenly people – like Christ. And now, we are to 'set our minds on things above, not earthly things.' The inspiration for living is not scratching around in the dirt with our rituals and religion but with heads held high peering into the face of Christ and the future which beckons us.

We are now given two lists, one of things we leave behind and one of things we take up – are to be clothed

in. Today we look at the first list, and next week Lorna will take us through the second list.

'Put to death', we are told, 'whatever belongs to your earthly nature.' And what follows is an expected list of things that would pollute and derail our relationship with God, each other, creation, and ourselves.

The New Living Translation records verses 5-9 as: *'So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behaviour, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.'*

This list of behaviours and attitudes which would wreck our connection with God are common themes, you can find them in the 10 commandments, the Law and Prophets, the Sermon on the Mount, and the teachings of Jesus and throughout the New Testament letter.

These are not though, THOU SHALT NOTS, but more like the loving parent, 'please don't, it'll destroy you.'

Sometimes these 'sins' are summed up as immorality, idolatry, and injustice – the three 'I's. It is selfishness, 'I', that is at the centre and God who is pushed out. Living with 'I' at the centre means, that instead of receiving the abundant life on offer, we risk the death that is the wages, or consequence of sin, No wonder God is angry, what he has made good is further destroyed and the life he has won, so painfully for us on the cross, is rejected, and a precious child is lost, as they continually move away from God.

How can we ensure we put these things behind us and move towards God? Well, the inspiration for leaving the things behind, is also a common theme too. It is Jesus Christ and setting our hearts, our minds our eyes on things above.



Seek first the Kingdom of God, says Jesus (Matthew 6:33). Fix our eyes

upon Jesus, Hebrews 12 reminds us, and here... Read 3:1-4. It's hard to gaze upon the majesty of God to look into the eyes of Christ and continue in sin!

We are to 'Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.'

Gaze on Jesus; be renewed in his image – put off the earthly things and put on, Jesus.

And to drive this and the past weeks' message home, our writers, Paul and Timothy, in our final verses today, hammer home that this is not about race, tradition, ritual, or culture. God, in Christ, draws us into one family and by his Spirit seeks to transform us into the image of our Creator – it's how we were originally made and what we have now been, re-made for, by our new life, new birth, in Christ.

As we remind ourselves from time to time, we are invited to take on the family likeness and join in the family business.

We are not just adding Jesus to the mix of options, whether philosophical thoughts, or religious behaviours – 'Christ is all, and is in all' This is a totally new, whole life transformation.

Next week we'll hear more about the positive behaviours we can develop.

**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 First Sunday of Lent.** Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord 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 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