

30th June, 2024

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.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

I hear the Saviour say,
"Thy strength indeed is small,
Child of weakness, watch and pray,
Find in me thine all in all."

For nothing good have I
Whereby Thy grace to claim;
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calvary's Lamb.

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Lord, now indeed I find
Thy power and Thine alone,
Can change the leper's spots
And melt the heart of stone.

And when, before the throne,
I stand in Him complete,
"Jesus died my soul to save,"
My lips shall still repeat.

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

The Sermon by Andrew Walters

Confident in Jesus

Read Philippians 3:1-6 and John 12:37-50

Timothy spoke last week of the people being sent to spread the good news of the gospel – thankful for those who we have serving us in ministry in the church; and to think about how we might be effective in going out to share the good news.

Next in the series, Paul talks of the framework for what is to come to celebrate and rejoice because Jesus is Lord.

Paul takes a small break to talk and give a warning not to trust in the flesh. Paul is likely to be heading off the problems he had in Galatia just a few years before, where Jewish Christians had infiltrated the church. He knew of their obsession with cutting them and serving the law to gain acceptance by God as his people

Circumcision started with Abram in Gen 17:13-14 – for every male born in his household or brought in as a foreigner. Any uncircumcised male will be cut off from his people.

This covenant brought about a new change for Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. Clearly a mark of importance: separating them out as God's people to be different. Difference is about being acceptable to God. Unfortunately, it became an obsession with circumcision of the flesh whereas the organ that God intended was our heart. That is what separates us.

As important as the sins of the flesh are, Paul's big concern is more subtle.

Paul is concerned with the pride connected with ancestry. People were very proud if they could trace their family tree back 2000 years to the great patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and which of Jacob's twelve sons they descend from. Rightly so as this would be pretty impressive.

The problem is that with the world view by flesh it's all too easy to feel superior, a cut above, because you have the badge of honour for separated as God's people

Paul issues warnings.

Being very bold, as Paul is, look out for:

He refers to the dogs as those who are only interested in ethnic purity. Dogs at this time were not usually the lovely pets we have today but wild and vicious!

Look out for: Evil doers. Bad works' people. Paul has an air of sarcasm or contempt. Those who he names are the people only keeping the law as a standard for membership in God's people.

Look out for: Mutilation. Shockingly, Paul says that these people who are circumcised and see themselves as a cut above are just making themselves cult-like pagans insisting on making ritual incisions, gashes or wounds in their body.

Paul's claim in verse three: the one who is circumcised. A cut apart and belong to God are those who worship and serve God by his spirit instead of continually thinking of his flesh.

To worship and serve Jesus Christ we need to behold him. He is our influencer (like what our children watch on TikTok) and neurologists have shown that we become what we behold.

The tax collector, Zacharius, beheld Jesus. Luke 19:1-8. He was a despised little man, cast from his community as crooked tax collectors were. He was so beholden with Jesus that he put all his fear and anxiety to one side and ventured out to see Jesus. He even climbed a tree for a better view. V9, Jesus said to him "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham (By the spirit he is shown in his heart). The son of man came to seek and save the lost.

Peter knew this, he had tried to follow in his own strength as we all can do but at the miraculous catch of fish in John 21:15. As Jesus asked if Peter loved him, and he commissioned Peter with three commands to match his denials.

- Feed my lambs
- Take care of my sheep
- Feed my sheep

At this point, Peter "got it".

In his own strength, it was not possible, but by the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ he is made righteous. In Christ anything is possible. Peter built the Church and died a horrible death being crucified upside down. Not in his strength but in the strength of Jesus our Lord.

This is to worship in the spirit of Jesus.

Good works are done in the same spirit of Jesus. Strength given by the almighty.

Prayer

Thank you lord, Mutilation is not required; we give you our hearts, our souls and our lives. Help us guard against temptation of the flesh and protect us from the works of the evil one.

Amen

5th Sunday 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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, 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).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: July 17th at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: July 17th at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: June 26th & July 24th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday, TBA
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.pariahofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>