

1st May, 2022

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, 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 will offer up my life in spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love as my
worship to You
In surrender I must give my every part
Lord, receive the sacrifice of a broken
heart

Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a
King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be
sung
As a praise of Your name for the things
You have done?
O my words could not tell, not even in
part
Of the debt of love that is owed by this
thankful heart

You deserve my every breath for
You've paid the great cost
Giving up Your life to death, even
death on a cross
You took all my shame away, there
defeated my sin
Opened up the gates of heaven and
have beckoned me in



Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a
King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be
sung
As a praise of Your name for the things
You have done?

Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a
King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be
sung
As a praise of Your name for the things
You have done?
O my words could not tell, not even in
part
Of the debt of love that is owed by this
thankful heart
What can I sing as an offering, Lord?

What can I give? What can I give to
You, to You?
Now, what can I give? What can I
bring?
What can I sing as an offering, Lord?

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3 and Matthew 4:18-25

The sermon given by Rev Howard Wright: Faith, Hope and Love.

This week we start a new series learning from 1 Thessalonians. I'd encourage you to read through the whole letter regularly as we go through this series.

Thessalonica is today the second largest city in Greece. It was founded 300 years before Christ, and in New Testament times, it was a free city of Rome enjoying prosperity.

The letter is written by Paul, together with Silas, and Timothy. You can read about Paul and Silas' visit in Act

As with Paul and Silas, the early church clearly faced opposition, even after their departure and there is clear concern about the well-being and faith of the Thessalonian Christians. Paul and Silas had hoped to visit the Thessalonians but being unable, they sent Timothy, who has just arrived with news, which prompts the letter. Written (most likely around 51AD) it is to encourage, strengthen and challenge them.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy, start with thankfulness. Read again verses 2 and 3. They are encouraged by their '...work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope...'

Work produced by Faith. Faith, or belief, must have an outworking or it's no faith, or belief, at all. See James 2:14-19

So, how was their faith seen? Read verses 6 & 7 and 9 & 10. Their belief in the Good News of Jesus resulted in a lifestyle and values change which was a model to others – even though an infant church.

So, how is our faith seen? It is currently seen in a commitment to service/worship to God, and not building for ourselves. It is seen in a confidence in the face of fear, and our belief in Christ when things are tough. It is seen through our church activities and our personal choices and behaviour – through our giving our time, money and very selves.

Labour Prompted by Love. Paul, Silas, and Timothy model love to the Thessalonians, praying for them, read 3:12-13. And they see in the Thessalonians the fruit of love, read 4:9-12

Our love is inspired by Jesus, for Jesus, his people, and all people. If we want to know God's love and how to love, we must spend time with Jesus at the cross. Read John 3:16, Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 4:10, and John 15:13, and spend reading through the Easter story in the Gospels.

The Thessalonians were a model of love, for God, each other, and the wider world. So how is our love seen? As mentioned earlier, through our service/worship and the church ministries we share in together. I am challenged by how much, as we've said before, we let people into our church, but not so easily into our lives! How can I love deeper and wider – I and we all must look to Jesus and follow his example.

The Thessalonians were able to open their lives to those around them, in fact Christians became known, as Jesus said they would, for their love for one another (John 13:35), and also for their compassion for the stranger – the least, the last, and the lost.

Endurance inspired by Hope: In the context of the hope of Jesus' return, the authors write: 'since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.' (5:8)

Romans tells us similarly of perseverance and hope – read Romans 5:2-5.

The Thessalonians demonstrated their hope in the Gospel of Jesus, see 1:8-10. Their hope is in Jesus, his salvation, and his eternal reward. For the general Thessalonians their hope was their wealth and situation. For the Christians of Thessalonica, all this had been risked for the sake of Christ.

What's our hope in and where is our hope fixed? The temptation of our age is to trust in this age and fail to look through it and beyond it. We too easily trust in the securities of earth. The writer of Hebrews tells us to fix our eyes on something solid, dependable, and eternal – read Hebrews 12:1.

Continually praying: Paul, Silas, and Timothy, write of their continuing prayers and encourage the Thessalonians to 'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.' (5:16-18).

We don't know how the Thessalonians fared in their prayers, but the church continued in the city. How are we doing in our prayers? Let's be a people, individually and together seeking God.

As we go through this series, let's be encouraged, there is so much that is good. And let this encouragement inspire on in faith, love, and hope, being a model to each other, to the wider church and to our communities that they might see the glory of God and like us follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

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, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: 3rd Sunday of Easter:

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; 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, 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).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Coffee & Questions: 25th May at 11am, Church Hall.
- Tea and Chat and Bowls: Wed. 18th May at 2pm, Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise for Harvest, Sunday, 2nd October, 3pm – 4.30pm
- Service of Thanksgiving & Remembering on Sunday 22nd May at 3pm. A service for those who have been bereaved; offered in the hope that it will be a support and give time to reflect and honour the memory of loved ones.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.