

# 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

## 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:**

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall  
rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and  
mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed  
Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore  
thee,  
casting down their golden crowns  
around the glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim falling  
down before thee,  
which wert and art and evermore  
shalt be.



The Good  
Shepherd  
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Holy, holy, holy! Though the  
darkness hide thee,  
though the eye of sinful man thy  
glory may not see,  
only thou art holy; there is none  
beside thee,  
perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name  
in earth, and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and  
mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed  
Trinity!

## **The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright: The King's gifts.**

### **Read Isaiah 10:1-4 and Matthew 6:1-4**

Today we return to the Sermon on the Mount series.

I'd encourage you to keep reading through Matthew 5-7, whilst we do this series.

Jesus has reaffirmed law. *'Do not think I have come to abolish the law'* (Matt 5:17). The King sets the bar high. The kind of Kingdom, the values, attitudes, and behaviours, the King desires is being made plain.

Our passage begins: *'Be careful not to practise your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.'* And from this Jesus gives three examples, giving, prayer, and fasting.

Jesus has already said, Mt. 5:16 – *"... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* So he's not talking about hiding away all our behaviour, but about our motivation – who are we doing this for? For human or God's approval?

We all have mixed motivations and risk doing good things for the wrong reason. John Ortberg said, "I know I'm supposed to be humble, but what if no one notices?" We can be like children, 'watch me mummy/daddy!'

Pastor Michael Luke quotes: 'Serena Williams won the Wimbledon Tennis tournament for the first time in 2002. After her impressive victory, a reporter asked Serena if it bothered her that many of the English fans were rooting against her. She politely said, "No," she understood – there had been people rooting against her all her life. But she still wanted to win for herself. Then she added, "Besides my dad was sitting in those stands, and I knew he was rooting for me and I wanted to please him.'"

We are to perform for the audience of one. To desire God's approval. If it's the approval of others we are after – we are going to be disappointed. We can't please all the people all the time, and if we try, we won't please God either.

Our self-worth needs to come from God. So, it's 'watch me daddy,' to our heavenly father.

Righteous giving starts by responding to God's generosity to us. Our motivation should be one of love. It's our love for God that drives righteous generosity.

God lavishes grace upon us. Read Romans 8:32. How much did Jesus have left when he gave himself upon the cross for you and me?

Our giving should reflect the generosity of God. Read Deuteronomy 15:10.

In the story of the widow's 'mite' or offering, (Mark 12:41-44.) The rich gave generously and openly – the money was apparently thrown into trumpet shaped funnels leading into metal chests. It would have made a fine noise when thrown. But the widow gave two tiny coins and Jesus commends her. Our generosity and giving, it seems, is judged not by what we give, but by what we have left – the rich still had plenty, she had nothing!

Righteous giving recognises that God doesn't owe us he owns us! For us to boast about giving to him what's already his, is absurd.

Giving has always been important to the people of God and in the Old Testament the tithe, 10%, was the starting point. And then there were gifts and offering on top.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. Where Paul reminds us God is no one's debtor.

And this theme continues through scripture. There is a theology, a doctrine, of rewards. God rewards his children. Verse 4 in our passage says, *'Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.'*

Jesus says, 'store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.' (Matthew 6:20). Read also, Matthew 16:27 & 19:29-30, and Ephesians 6:8.

So, have a righteous focus and watch your motivation. Respond in love, generously to God – in service to him. Invest in Heaven, and seek God's approval, not that of others.

**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: Trinity Sunday:** Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; 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 forever. 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.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 21<sup>st</sup> June at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 28<sup>th</sup> June at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.