

10th October 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, 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 cast my life like ashes on the waves
And leave behind all of my selfish ways
My past is gone, now all that's left is grace
To live is Christ, to die is gain

I have been crucified with Christ
It is no longer I who lives
But Christ lives in me
I have a second chance at life
My future's open wide
I know Christ lives in me
He lives in me

My dreams I lay surrendered at the cross
My hands held high, my knees upon the dust
My choice is made, I've counted up the cost
To live is Christ, to die is gain

I'm pressing on, pressing on to Heaven
I've seen the power of Your resurrection
The Saviour of my soul, is Jesus Christ alone

Read: John 16:5-33

God With Us - a summary of the talk given by David Bush.

Have you watched films and TV programmes with a the scene where some person is lying on their deathbed, and gathered around them are people straining to hear their last words – maybe it is who has killed them, maybe it is the disposal of their world belongings, maybe the revealing of some great secret. As viewers we too often strain forward in our chairs at that point, sucked into the suspense.

Metaphorically this passage is that moment for Jesus. The disciples straining forward trying to understand his final words.

Let us do the same. Sit forward, on the edge of our seats, straining to hear.

Let me start with this rather odd question ... If Jesus were here in person now ... what WOULDN'T you ask him?

Of course there are a million answers to that, but I suggest what we shouldn't ask Him is 'please stop the change, please let's keep things as we know them, as they are.'

Jesus was the world's biggest agent of change. Ever. The agent, the cause, the reason. By extension, of course, as his followers, as his hands in the world today, we should be too.

Jesus didn't come to take the world back to Old Testament times, he was himself the fulfilment of Old Testament teaching. It isn't that the world wasn't created well, or imperfectly. It wasn't that there hadn't been great teachers, acts, institutions in the past. It is that Jesus is pragmatic and applied in his teaching – the people in the world had moved on (and not always positively of course).

We too today live in a world that is 'moving on' – and if we are Jesus' people, his hands and feet today – it falls to us to find a way to be fresh and relevant to the world.

That starts with a recognition of that Jesus means change today as much as he meant change then. Jesus says this in the passage about the Holy Spirit:

Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:

He comes, Jesus says, to YOU – to YOU and I.

He comes, Jesus says, to show us we are wrong about SIN (Sin not Sins, note).

Sin in the singular I understand as my personal rebellion against God – my focus on me, my selfishness, what I want, my misuse of His world, and the hurt I cause to His people. The Holy Spirit starts with ME – where I rebel, and am wrong, not where others rebel and are wrong.

So I need to change.

However much I might want things to be to ‘go back to how they were’, or ‘stay as they are’ the Spirit’s call on me is to engage with the world as it is, and find a fresh and relevant way to be a Christian in it.

Now I can’t tell you what to do, I can’t tell you how to engage, what to be or do differently either as an individual, or as a group – but I do encourage you to

- accept that in this moment, the world is changed
- recognise that Jesus **is about** change in the world
- reflect deeply on whether you are rebelling against Him or revolutionising with him
- commit with the Spirit’s aid to find new ways to bring Jesus love to the changed world

Now change can be difficult – change can bring weeping and mourning. Pain like the pain of childbirth. Grief.

Anguish. These I think you know, these we have experienced.

In the light of this change, turmoil, pain and struggle ... here is what I hear as the final words in that film scene – the person on the deathbed so to speak, about to utter the revelatory words, here is where the detective or the family cranes forward to hear, here is where the voice becomes a whisper, and we the audience move forward on the edge of our seats.

Jesus, metaphorically, whispers to his disciples, and to us

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

In the modern vernacular he says to us “I’ve got this.”

As individuals and in our faith groups we are continually challenged by a changing world, and by finding new ways to be relevant and fresh in it.

Again borrowing the modern vernacular.

Jesus has Got This, and so You’ve Got This!

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: 19th after Trinity: O God, forasmuch as without you we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; 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: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am, 9.30am & 7pm. And we are now live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment but will now become available the week after the service, rather than the week before.

Bishop David will be joining us for a confirmation service at COGS at 7pm, 14th November. If anyone is interested in discussing confirmation or would like to explore getting confirmed at this upcoming service, please let Matt or Howard know.

