

12th June, 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:

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished

His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

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Read 1 Thessalonians 1:17-3:13

Matthew 5:38-48

We return this week to our 1 Thessalonians series. Paul and Silas' had to escape from the prosperous city of Thessalonica after three weeks successfully sharing about Jesus, leaving the infant church on their own. This letter, written in response to a report from Timothy, is to encourage, strengthen and challenge these new Christians.

You can feel the love that Paul, Silas, and Timothy's have for the Thessalonians. Speaking of being 'orphaned' by having to leave them, and the 'intense longing' to see them.

But they were stopped by Satan. Surely if God is both big and good how can Satan interfere? We are warned, 'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.' (Ephesians 6:12)

There is a battle for minds, (2 Cor 10:4-5) the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And a battle for the hearts and lives of us all – there is more than this world, we know that otherwise we wouldn't be dissatisfied with the world and wish for a happily ever after.

But God has won, there are battles until the end, that is, our death, or the return of Jesus but in the meanwhile: There is nothing that God will not walk with us through, nothing he won't limit, and nothing he won't transform to good! For example, 1 and 2 Thessalonians would not have been written if Paul and Silas had been able to make a return visit.

Paul and Silas saw sharing Jesus and starting a church in Thessalonica as 'their greatest hour.' 'For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?'

What do we have to boast about in our life? Maybe our career, family, possessions, or hobbies, etc. But what will we have to boast of before Jesus? Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

We get caught out sometimes on this earth, investing in the wrong things. For example, buying the latest fashionable thing only to discover it's already out of date – notice the current somewhat desperate adverts for mobile phones! But eternal judgment is coming and woe to us who invest in this life only. '19 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' (Matthew 5:19-21.)

Timothy was sent to Thessalonica, because of concern for the new Christians and their faithfulness in the face of trials.

Jesus warns us two types of trial (See Parable of the Sower, Luke 8 [also in Matt 13, and Mark 4]). Those scared off by persecution and pain. 'Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. And, those distracted, seduced by God's good gifts pursuing them instead of the gift giver. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.'

Thankfully in Thessalonians case, Timothy returns with good news. They are standing firm in faith and love – they believe and living it. So, What is the report for you, for us? Be encouraged but be careful. We are warned in 1 Corinthians 10:12, '... if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!', and similarly in Revelation (See 3:14-22)

We find that Paul, Silas and Timothy, say they 'really live' because of the faith of these others!

Are we part of others finding faith – committed in prayer and giving of time, skill, or money? We can be. There is much encouragement to be had in hearing about other's faith. Connect with groups – pray for them and invest wisely, (:10) 'supply what's lacking in your faith.'

A prayer for us all: 'May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, ... May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

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 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.

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: Wed. 15th June at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee & Questions: 22nd June at 11am, Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise for Harvest, Sunday, 2nd October, 3pm – 4.30pm
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.