

13th March, 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:

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease

My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.

This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

The sermon given by Timothy James: Faith Defeats Giants.

Read I Samuel 24: 1-15 – David spares Saul’s life at the cave of En Gedi.

Luke 8: 22-25 – Jesus calms the storm on the lake.

David is frequently praised for being a person of faith. 1 Samuel 13:14 is often quoted: “the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people”.

The Bible shows that people of faith are not born but made. God hammers them out on the anvil of their lives until they see his will and can follow it. We see this in the lives of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, and Peter, Paul and John.

What/whom did God use to make David? They include Samuel, Goliath and the Philistines, Saul and Jonathan. Specifically, Saul’s suspicions and malice were the anvil on which God forged David the king.

Here is where this incident lies in the story of David and Saul:

- Saul offends God (by impatiently failing to wait for his plan). God sends Samuel to anoint David. David comes to Saul’s court. [I Sam. 16]
- David kills Goliath. [I Sam.17]
- David becomes Saul’s battle commander and Saul becomes jealous of his popularity and his son Jonathan’s love for him. He tries to engineer David’s death in battle against the Philistines. Jonathan helps David escape from Saul’s court when Saul gives this up and is planning to execute him. [I Sam. 18-21]
- David sets up a band of 400-600 fighters (distressed, debtors and his own clan). His parents become refugees in Moab. Saul massacres the priests who helped David. [I Sam. 22]
- David sets up base in the desert. Saul mounts expeditions whenever he gets intelligence about where David is, but is also distracted by the continuing battles against the Philistines. [I Sam. 23]
- This incident at En Gedi. Saul acknowledges David’s succession (v.20). [I Sam. 24]. (The composition of Psalm 57 is attributed to this event).
- David spares Saul again at Hachilah. [I Sam. 26]
- David flees to Gath and fights for the Philistines as a mercenary, but not against the Israelites, hiding the fact by leaving no survivors. [I Sam. 27]
- Saul dies in battle against the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa – David is prevented from fighting by the distrust of the Philistine commanders. [I Sam. 28-29]

So David was no saint: he was a ruthless fighter, a bandit, a mercenary and arguably a protection racketeer. But he had faith in a way Saul did not.

But David and Saul are bound together by God's intentions for about 13 years.

David did not look at Saul as his unrelenting enemy but as the Lord's anointed, and so he refused to harm him or his family despite the threat he presented and the prophecies that said David was chosen by God to be Israel's king.

Note two things about David's faith:

1. David does not "help along" God's plan for his succession. Contrast Saul's impatience and seeking his own ideas, rather than straight obedience to God's commands (13:8-14, 15:17-31).

But Samuel replied [to Saul], "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king." (1 Samuel 15:22–23, NLT)

Saul did not obey the wisdom of Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." God expects total obedience, not partial obedience with excuses.

2. It is not a simple matter of David learning patience and forgiveness as character traits through his relationship with Saul.

David does not show this same patience and faith later: when he becomes what God said he would make him, he effectively says "I am now king: God made me king; kings don't do what others tell them." The Bathsheba sin is the most obvious and well-known example. Who knows what God had planned for Bathsheba (Solomon's mother) if David had waited?

Power corrupts, and God's anointed are not necessarily immune to corruption. If David had retained the kind of faith he had at En Gedi, much pain could have been spared.

So keep waiting on God. His plan is best.

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: Second Sunday of Lent: *Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord 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 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: 16th March at 2pm, Church Hall.
- Coffee & Questions: 23rd March at 11am, Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3rd April at 3pm, in Church.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: 10th April.