

Sunday 14 June 2020

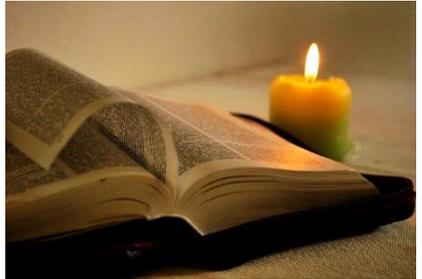
The paper-version Service



For now, we cannot meet in the building – but the church is still open!

All of our services are online www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk but this weekly sheet captures our Sunday service for those without internet.

To Begin: Find a Bible. If safe, perhaps light a candle. Find a comfortable place 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 modern song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



Opening Prayer: God of love, thank you that you welcome us into your family. We are not worthy to be called your children, and we confess our failure to you. Thank you that you forgive us, through Jesus, and offer us new life, by your Holy Spirit. Help us to respond to you today in worship, to hear your words and live them and share your Good News, your love, and your glory, with our neighbours and communities today. **Amen**

Song:

O perfect love, O perfect sacrifice,
Fountain of life poured out for me.
What heights and depths of heaven's
mercy,
The faithfulness that I believe.
And to whom shall I run?
And in whom shall I hide?
Only You hold the truth I desire.
O perfect love, my prayer shall ever
be, to be found in Jesus.

O perfect love, O perfect mystery,
You were condemned, but I go free.
What truth to know that I can rest
upon:
Your perfect love has covered me.

And what can this heart know?
And what can this heart tell?
But of grace that has rescued me.
O perfect love, My prayer shall ever
be, to be found in Jesus.

O perfect love, forever I shall sing
Of heaven's gates flung wide for me.
Where fear of death and tears of
hopelessness
Are swallowed up in victory.
And what praise shall be sung
Still to the Holy One;
To the Saviour, Redeemer and King.
O perfect love, my song will ever be:
'I am found in Jesus.'

Read: Ephesians 4:1-16

Living by Love (a summary of the talk given by Howard Wright):

In the preceding chapters of Ephesians Paul has been passionately writing about the new life and new family God is offering to us all. In other words, how, through Jesus, the Kingdom of God is on offer for us to enter and begin today!

Now Paul begins to write about new standards which come about from our new life in God and in this new family. And he begins with a solemn appeal: 'As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.'

This new family is from diverse backgrounds, but it is critical that we are united. So, Paul writes: 'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.' (4:1)

We live in a fractured world and we will need to work at unity. But it is a holy calling. Jesus says: '*Blessed are the peace makers they will be called children of God*' (Matthew 5:9) – It is a family thing to make peace.

In today's me-centred rights-orientated age, our society has made the norm complaining and blaming.

We believe we have a right to complain and so complain we will, at politicians, the rest of society, the lockdown, the lack of lockdown and

so on, the church and even one another.

But are my complaints, humble, gentle, patient, loving? Am I taking on the family likeness? Jesus did not fight for his rights; he fought, and gave his life, for the rights of others!

As Christians we are on the same team, heading to the same goal. We will have differences, but we must work at unity.

God is one, there is one Jesus, one faith, one baptism (4:4-5). We are called to be one, united in Jesus, by his Spirit and striving to work together, growing together, not fragmenting as we exert ourselves and our rights.

Romans 12:18 says: '*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*' And verse 3 of our reading stress we are to, '*Make every effort...*'

One way of 'making every effort' for unity is using the gifts, abilities, energy, and resources we have been given to serve other. Encouraging maturity and equipping ourselves, and others, in truth and love.



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Grace (Greek word *charis* from which we get charismatic) has been gifted to us (:7) and this is seen in the different gifts given to us (:11). We are all invited to share these gifts, serving each other for the glory of God and the 'common good' of all humanity.



These gifts have been obtained at such a cost but indicate such power at work. God in Jesus cast so low for us, but now raised so much higher (:9-10). These gifts are gracefully, and freely, given to us by God, how freely do we share them with others?

These gifts are to be used humbly, gently, patiently, lovingly within the family of God, to see God's people equipped for serving. Enabling the church to grow-up (Deeper in God) and grow-out (Larger in Mission).

Let us grow up. 'no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.' (:14)

Do not be vulnerable to lies and trickery of our day:

- Materialism – I want this stuff and more will make me happy.
- Hedonism – I will pursue my pleasure, my comfort, now!
- Consumerism – I will buy for me to use and then buy more.
- Selfishness – I will keep all that I am and can gain for myself. I will not share with those in need unless it benefits me.
- Pride – it is mine, I earned it and I deserve.

These things listed are challenged in the first 3 chapters and shown to be so worthless in comparison to the glory shared with us in Jesus and His Spirit.

The invitation of Jesus is to join in with him, receive the gifts he offers and share them with others.

His love, life and gifts are incomparable with any earthly riches. They are everlasting. They are freely given and not earned. They are given to be given away in service.

Jesus challenges us: '*If God has been generous with you, he will expect you to serve him well. But if he has been more than generous, he will expect you to serve him even better.*' (Luke 12:48)

So, will we take on the family likeness and join in the family business?

To do so from this passage is to live in loving unity and strive for peace. Sharing all the grace and gifts that God has shared with us with those around us. Be praying, seeking God for what he has for you.



Prayers: *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV)*

- Pray for the day ahead and its tasks
- Pray for the nations
- Pray for organisations
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends
- Pray for the Church

Collect for Today: O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; 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: If you know of others who'd like to receive this, or you'd rather not receive it; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.

