

Sunday 10th January 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, you are beyond our comprehension and yet draw close to us in Jesus, thank you. Renew our vision of your glory, help us lift our eyes and glimpse your majesty, that inspired, we might walk forwards in holiness and faithfulness, sharing your message of love and hope with the world. In the name of Jesus we pray, **Amen**

Song:

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before, O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name*

The sun comes up, it's a new day
dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever
lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening
comes

Bless the Lord, O my soul...

You're rich in love and You're slow to
anger
Your name is great and Your heart is
kind

For all Your goodness, I will keep on
singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart
to find

Bless the Lord, O my soul...

And on that day when my strength is
failing
The end draws near and my time has
come
Still, my soul will sing Your praise
unending
Ten thousand years and then
forevermore

Bless the Lord, O my soul...

Read: Colossians 1:1-8.

Faith in Christ Jesus. *A summary of the talk given by Howard Wright.*

We are starting a new series making our way through Paul and Timothy's letter to the church in Colossae, a Roman Colony in today's modern Turkey.

Most likely written whilst Paul was in prison (house arrest) in Rome around AD60. Paul and Timothy are writing to a church they'd not visited, though it was started by a disciple of Paul's, Epaphras.

Written so long ago, what's it got to do with us? Well, their issues were not so different to ours. The major 'issue' being addressed was most likely pressure to conform to those around them. Their culture, much like ours, said 'Join in, fit in, follow the fashions of our perfect society.'

'All scripture is God breathed' (2 Timothy 3:16) and God speaks through Paul and Timothy to spell out that Christ is preeminent. He is, the Almighty, God and King above all. There is no need to look elsewhere for anything, including salvation. His Kingship requires we live our lives shaped by him and his Spirit, not by any other ideas, values, hopes, religions.

The letter doesn't present anything new but reaffirms the original and best Gospel – Jesus Christ our Saviour King, who died for our sin,

who is raised to life, who reigns supreme and who will judge us all.

It is important for us, in disturbing times to continue to be reminded of the sovereign nature of God in Christ – so, let's listen to God through his Word. Try to make time of the next few days to read the whole of Colossians in one sitting. And over the coming weeks read it again, and again, perhaps using different translations.

Today we look at the opening verses.

God's Holy People, the faithful in Christ (:2)

We are Holy by God's grace, the action of Jesus on the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. As we live up to this Holiness, we are identified and known as the faithful. Are we known as holy and faithful, or are we just fitting in with everyone else?

This does not mean we are Holier-than-thou, miserable, judgmental, self-righteous people to be around. But people, who like Jesus, radiate the warmth, love, light and, and this is most difficult to get right, the challenge of the Gospel.

Together and as individuals we have achieved an amazing amount over the past months. We are known as a church that is good news to our community and living for Jesus. We are not perfect but are hopefully

moving in the same direction as the Colossians, who are known as holy and faithful bringing grace and peace into the world around us.

The inspiration for being Holy and Faithful is their faith in Jesus and hope stored up in Heaven.

As we walk into this New Year with continuing restrictions upon us because of Coronavirus, where is our faith and hope fixed?

It's difficult to be good news if our sight and minds are only occupied with the world and its woes. We need a better perspective and Colossians delivers this perspective – and the inspiration is Jesus. Read Colossians 1:15-17.

How is our perspective of Jesus in the context of our daily lives? Do we notice him and allow him to inspire us in faith and hope? Their hope is described as stored up in Heaven. Read John 14:1-2 and Philippians 1:21.

There is hope for this world, but this world can never satisfy until the return of Christ and the dwelling of God completely with us – the Kingdom of Heaven fully here.

For the Colossians, the risk was that they lived investing all into this life, their comforts and pleasures, their significance and securities. The risk is

the same for us – investing in the temporary, and failing to seek first the Kingdom of God, the permanent eternal life with God forever.

The Holy and Faithful had then and have today, their faith fixed in Jesus and their and hope fixed in Heaven. Inspiring them then and us today to greater faith and hope and living a life of love.

It's love, which is the final part of today's look at the introduction.

The Colossians' holiness and faithfulness, their faith and hope are not casual thoughts, a hobby, or dinner-time conversation starters, they are the foundations of their lives producing fruit in particular behaviours and attitudes, most supremely, love.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

This is the life of holiness and faithfulness, inspired by a hope stored in Heaven, a life of love, reflecting the wonder of Jesus, being good news to our family, friends, neighbours and community.

As we study this part of the Bible together let us be inspired by the Glory of Jesus and live with perspective on today's events being known as people of the King – the Holy and Faithful, the good news people.

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 the nations, their leaders, and peoples; pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends
- Pray for the Church

First Sunday of Epiphany – Baptism of Christ: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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: Sadly, for the safety of everybody and following advice from the bishops, we have suspended our Sunday worship once again. We hope to re-open once risk allows.

Give thanks to God, we collected £1625 for Karamoja through our Christmas collections, and hundreds connected with our online services, Holiday at Home, and children's and family's events.

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.

