

29th May, 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:

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that
Thou art.

Thou my best Thought, by day or by
night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my
light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true
Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me,
Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee
one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for
the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;

Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high
Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power
of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty
praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and
always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou
art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright
Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever
befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 and Matthew 5:33-37

The sermon for One-Service Sunday by Lorna Littlewood: Word and Judgment.

Paul is writing with great gratitude to the church in Thessalonica. He's aware that the success of their church is down to the work of God and not himself. He says the reason for his thanks to God is because "when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God ..."

The Thessalonian church had received this news through men, but had received it as it actually was – news from God himself. The men were merely the vessels and the church recognised the original author. This can be a challenge to us – when we hear (or read) someone teaching us about the Bible, are we expecting to hear learned wisdom from a human, or are we seeking the Holy Spirit to speak directly to us, simply using that person as a vessel? When we read the Bible for ourselves, are we reading it as history written down by humans a long time ago, or are we recognising that "all scripture is God breathed" (1 Timothy 2:13)

Of course, there is always the possibility of human error – we are all broken and that includes those of us who have the privilege of teaching from the front of the church. Our prayer is for God to use what the teacher is offering to speak his message into our hearts – leaving behind anything that is not of him. Our opportunity is to search the word of God for ourselves, soaking in his history and wisdom, knowing that it is written just as much for us as it was for the original readers.

The Bible often refers to Jesus as "the Word," and many of us will recognise John's beautifully crafted words at the beginning of his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was

with God.” So, it’s not just that these words we read in scripture are from God, but that in reading them we are engaging with God himself.



In 1 Thessalonians, Paul goes on to explain that the word of God is active; he describes it at the end of verse 3 as being “at work in you who believe.” This is because when we truly engage with God himself through his word, we engage with and are transformed by his Holy Spirit.

For the Thessalonian church, this work of the Word produced an extraordinary ability to live out the gospel with joy even in suffering (see chapter 1 verse 5-6). This was a church that was facing persecution but was still imitating the churches in Judea in their joyful attitude to their circumstance. I wonder what transformation God’s word will bring to us?

You might find it helpful to choose a Psalm, and read through it slowly, several times, choosing to notice the words and phrases that stand out to you and asking God in your thoughts what work it is that he might like to do in your heart and life through these words. Alternatively, you might find it helpful to read a passage of scripture with a friend, and then discuss what you think is significant about it, praying for God’s guidance in your conversation as you explore together – you could even check with the notes in a study Bible or commentary to give some more guidance.

However it is that we choose to engage with scripture, it seems that God’s message to us here through Paul is that we are to receive it as God’s word – it is sacred and significant. It is an enormous privilege to hear from God himself in human language, all we have to do is to pick it up.

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: Seventh Sunday of Easter:

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, 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.