

Traditional Home service Sunday 14th March

OPENING PRAYER

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; 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.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Lord Jesus Christ, we confess we have failed you as did your first disciples. We ask for your mercy and your help.

**O King enthroned on high, filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name, Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you to take our guilt away, and to cleanse our lips to speak your word, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Immortal, Invisible*)

READINGS - Psalm 127
Colossians 3.12-17

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

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.

HYMN 2 (*To God be the glory*)

CONCLUSION

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious, the
Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name
we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as
light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest
in might;
Thy justice like mountains high
soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of
goodness and love.

To all life thou givest—to both great
and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on
the tree,
And wither and perish—but nought
changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of
light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling
their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to
see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth
thee.

To God be the glory, great things He
hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us
His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for
sin,
And opened the life gate that all may
go in.

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let
the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let
the people rejoice!
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus
the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things
He hath done.*

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase
of blood,
To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon
receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great
things He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus
the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will
be
Our wonder, our transport, when
Jesus we see.

Sermon for 14th March 2021

Louise Morton

Reflecting as I started preparing, last Mother's Day we were in isolation probably with covid.

This Sunday marks a year since our last normal Sunday! I have done a lot of Mother's Day talks !

Today I've Chosen passages not used before, and speak wider than mothering!

I am now not only a mother, spiritual mother, foster mother, but also a grandmother!

I've experienced the pain of being a covid granny!

Unable to go near our grandchild for the first 4 months, such joy ! When I eventually was able to hold him!

Mother's Day I am always mindful of the joys and sorrows.

The bitter and the sweet.

The pain of broken relationships, grief and loss of children and parents, the disappointment of longed for children who never came, missed opportunities, during this season of pandemic just being unable to meet our parents, or our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren! There's been pain to carry.

News reports, personal knowledge, has often been mothers that have borne the brunt of the combination of working from home, and home schooling, a just about impossible juggle.

Pray using a verse from psalm 127
"Don't you know he enjoys giving rest to those he loves?"

Ask for rest:

Rest from grief, rest from disappointment, rest from dashed dreams, rest from the pain of broken relationships, rest from the pain of separation.

At this time when another two months of home schooling just come to an end, and unique pressures have been put on parents and children alike. Pray for rest from weariness and strains of parenting! Be reassured He sees all the little acts, all the sacrifices.

Pray, around this verse : Don't you know he enjoys giving rest to those He loves. Amen

The Colossians reading gives me a sense of dressing flamboyantly for God!

A kind of feminine version of spiritual armour! ?!

Obviously this passage applies to all !

' so chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you...

Compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline....

Whatever else you put on ' wear love, it's your basic all purpose garment!'

Wondering in my head about running this analogy with the house building in psalm 127

If God doesn't build the house, the builders only build shacks.

Choose between bricks or clothing!

People are so good at giving importance to what's not really important, and then hardly regarding, or down grading, what is so very important.

Question what does God build or what's in his wardrobe!

Paul has pulled the Colossians up on what they are hanging on to!

(See it like clothes they no longer need!, remember finding a pair of navy school socks still not worn out when I was in my at least mid twenties)

Jewish, non Jewish, religious, irreligious, insider, outsider, slave free.....

All these ways of defining people need to go, no longer important, now everyone defined by Christ, included in Christ!

Huge in that society, still relevant today,
how are we seeing others?
Do we subtly regard people differently?
Do we value all the same?
Do we see some as in, and others out?
So easy in our desire to belong, to do
this.

This is not how God builds, this is not in
his wardrobe!

Time and again we see God go for the
odd ball! The outsider! Gideon of the
least tribe and the least in his family
chosen and called out as a mighty
warrior.

Jesus stopping for the bleeding woman,
who was poor, seen as unclean, on his
way to someone of status house, Jairus
leader of a synagogue. Jesus was known
as a friend of sinners and tax collectors,
the disreputable, he had friends who
were women at a time when men just
didn't!

That's how God builds! That's what's in
his wardrobe!

In the previous paragraphs Paul has said
what's also out!
Among them: lying, bad temper,
irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty
talk.....

Then Paul gives what makes the cut,
what enables us to build beautiful, or
wear the very best!
Compassion, kindness, humility, quiet
strength, discipline, even tempered.
All we do cloaked in Love, washed in
forgiveness, and thankfulness!

Why ?
Enough in a way, to say it's God way,
Nigel last week mentioned about
avoiding rebellion, used a great
example of coving, didn't need to
understand it, just obey the rules, if this
is what God says works ! It works!
Then who are we to say thankfulness not
for me, forgiveness not my style!

It's shoddy building, bad dressing!

But actually! It works our lives out better!
Wonderful example from Ernest Gordon
of the prisoners of war, who worked the
Burma Siam railway, 80,000 men died
building it, 393 for every mile.

The harshest most brutal existence,
caused them to live with hate as their
main motivation.

He describes how a change came over
the camp after a man was prepared to
falsely accept the blame for a missing
shovel, to prevent everyone being shot,
the man was promptly beaten to death,
and soon after the shovel found.

The incident caused a change in their
thinking..'.death was still with us -no
doubt about that. But we were slowly
being freed from its destructive grip.
Selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy,
greed, self indulgence laziness and pride
were all anti life.

Love, heroism, self sacrifice, sympathy,
mercy, integrity and creative faith, on the
other hand, were the essence of life,
turning existence into living in its truest
sense.

These were the gifts of God to men..'
This is Paul's instructions to the
Colossians tried and tested in the
harshest place!

Their forgiveness extended even to the
guards as the war came to an end...

Other question wanted to address was :
How?

How do we build this way? Wear the
clothes from the right wardrobe?
It's together! Paul writes about keeping in
tune with each other, in step, teaching
and admonishing each other, singing
together!

This season is a really challenging time to do this ! Laws and guidelines are keeping us apart!

We are not allowed to sing!

We have to be inventive and we are being!

If you are reading this, or watching me !

You are working at keeping connected!

The Lord will honour that.

In this age, we have the wonders of technology! For example:

What's app! The lent course zoom discussions (really enjoying this!).

Loved hearing about acts of love and kindness, contacts kept, cakes baked, shopping done ...all kinds of ways we are keeping in touch..cloaked in love !

We build well or wear well, together ! why being part of a bigger picture, part of His body so important, again we may protest rather do it my way!

But it Won't end well! It's a shack, it's bad dressing, Paul words it like this: none of this going off and doing your own thing!.

May well of heard me say before I love CS Lewis! Wonderfully weird book the Hideous strength!

Near the end there is be a wonderful goodbye dinner (do so recommend these books, read them several times !)
main characters go to chose from beautiful robes, extraordinary garments:
Find there's not a mirror in the room:
I don't believe we were meant to see ourselves, said Jane. He (that's the christ like figure in the book, the Fisher King) said something about being mirrors enough to see another.

They Find such joy seeing one after the other find the perfect splendid garment!
Finding them for each other, enjoying the beauty, the qualities they see in each other, enhanced by what each in turn puts on.

So let's endeavour, Holy Spirit help us, to build how God builds, to wear heavenly garments, to surrender ourselves together to be His, in so doing we call out the best in each other

Finish with the end of the passage:

Let every detail in your lives words actions whatever, be done in the name of the master Jesus thanking God the father every step of the way.

Amen