

Traditional Home service Sunday 22nd May

OPENING PRAYER

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; 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

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden, to ask for his forgiveness and peace:

*Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God.
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 (*Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus*)

READINGS - Acts 11.1-18
Revelation 21.1-6
Luke 24:13-35

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 (*Trust and Obey*)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace

2 His word shall not fail you he
promised
Believe him and all will be well
Then go to a world that is dying
His perfect salvation to tell

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace

3 O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace

1 When we walk with the Lord
in the light of his word,
what a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will,
he abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:
*Trust and obey, for there's no other
way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and
obey.*

2 Not a burden we bear,
not a sorrow we share,
but our toil he doth richly repay;
not a grief or a loss,
not a frown or a cross,
but is blest if we trust and obey.

[Refrain]

3 But we never can prove
the delights of his love
until all on the altar we lay;
for the favor he shows,
for the joy he bestows,
are for them who will trust and obey.

[Refrain]

4 Then in fellowship sweet
we will sit at his feet,
or we'll walk by his side in the way;
what he says we will do,
where he sends we will go;
never fear, only trust and obey.

[Refrain]

Sermon - Adrian Morton

Rev 21:10,22-22:5 & John 14:23-29

"If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

I asked for the Revelation reading because it reminds us of the big picture of what God is doing in this world.

The book of Revelation is the final chapter in God's eternal plan for his children...

... and brings us full circle to the original desire of God...

That Sin will be forever removed and the design of the garden of Eden will be totally realised.

That humankind will again walk in the reality of God's presence.

And our reading from Revelation stresses that even further.

The new city of God, where God's presence will dwell will have no need for the sun or the moon to shine.

Because the glory, the presence of God, gives it light.

and as v24 says the nations will walk by its light...

Those whose names are written in the book of life will inherit those things...

Its that which qualifies us..
That our names are written in the book of life...

In Luke 10 Jesus refers to this..

After he sends out the 72 to minister..

They come back all excited because they were able to cast out demons.

And Jesus says to them...

do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

How do we know our names are written in the book of life?

It's simply having faith in Jesus.

Believing in Him...

Once we do that, our names are written down..

I'd imagine there's an 'Admin' angel, whose job it is to record each time someone gives their life to Jesus.

You know that there'll also be angel 'party planners'... because we know that there is rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents...

It says earlier in Revelation 3:5 that the one who is victorious, the one who overcomes.

So the one who keeps the faith, keeps persevering to the end..

Jesus says: *I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.*

Knowing the big picture of God's plan.
Knowing that our name is written in the book of life should be source of great Hope to us.

That is where our futures are heading...

Its a Hope that not even death can interrupt...

Our futures are secure...

In the meantime though of course, we are living in this troubled world..

And our world is troubled...
e.g. the war in Ukraine, cost of living crisis, the middle east, Afghanistan, the climate crisis....

We could go on...!

And in our John reading and ongoing through these few chapters Jesus is preparing his followers to live in a troubled world.

Though trouble primarily in the sense of persecution to who Jesus is and the Good News.

And he says to them, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."

I feel like I've spoken many times about Peace, and how we cultivate peace in our lives.

That peace isn't about the absence of conflict or trouble. But the peace that Jesus gives is the presence of someone in the midst of conflict and trouble.

And that Someone of course is the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit of Jesus.

We are meant to live our lives knowing the presence of the Holy Spirit with us.

We are to live with glimpses, tasters of the Holy Spirit.
That both confirms our future hope that I've already spoken about.

But also is a present source of peace in this troubled world.

For the rest of this morning, I want to concentrate on v23 of our reading.

Because v23 sets us up for living with the Holy Spirit and the peace Jesus promises.

Jesus says this:

"If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

"If anyone..."

Its conditional... we all have a choice to make...
Anyone... hands up who is included in 'anyone'!!!!

The choice is available to all...

"If anyone loves me..."

Did you know there are 7 words in Ancient Greek that can be used for our one word 'love'.

I'm not going to go through all 7.
C.S. Lewis famously described four of them:

Storge (store-jay) - family love, the love between parents and child.
Its a asymmetrical love...

Eros - which is a sexual or romantic love.
The NT doesn't use that.

Philia- which is a friendship love, a love between friends that share a similar interest.
So in Romans 12:20 Paul urges the believers to be devoted to one another in brotherly philia (love).

But the most common word used in the NT is *agape*...

Agape love is unconcerned with self.
Its concerned with the greatest good of another.

Agape isn't born just out of emotions or attraction.
But it comes from the will, its a choice we make.

So Agape requires faithfulness, commitment and sacrifice without expecting anything in return.

The Greek word for love used here in v23 is 'agape..'

The problem we English speaking people have is that we use our one word love to cover everything.

And it gets confusing..

So a husband will come to me and say, I've fallen out of love with my wife.

We've drifted apart and don't share any common interests any more.

Well, what they are really saying is that they have fallen out of philia love.

Friendship love is important in a marriage, don't get me wrong.

But actually, we are called to agape (love) our wives.

Ephesians 5:25, "husbands love your wives..."

The word is agape...

That love is unconcerned with self. It's about commitment and sacrifice. It comes from the will, a choice we make. Jesus is saying here, If anyone agapes me..

If anyone, as an act of will, commits to me.

They will obey my teaching.
Love and obedience go together...

Obedience is a natural consequence that comes from love.

<I have an awful job trying to convince a would be wife to obey her husband when they come to me to chat about getting married.

Mainly because its so imbalanced. The marriage service doesn't give the would be husband the opportunity to say they will obey the wife!>

Anyway, that is probably an unhelpful digression!

Obedience is a natural consequence that comes from love.

We will obey the one we have chosen to commit to.

So again,

Jesus is saying here, If anyone agapes me..

If anyone, as an act of will, commits to me.

Then my Father will agape them.
My Father will choose to commit to them...

So this isn't about fuzzy feelings.
This isn't about emotional love...

This is about choice, commitment and sacrifice...

When we choose to commit to Jesus and place him first in our affections in life.

Then Father chooses to commit to us...

This is a strong bond of commitment and faithfulness..

That is agape...

Then Jesus says, "*we will come and make our home with him.*"

Literally, we will "abode" or live with him.

When we believe in Jesus.
When we place our faith in Him.
When we give our life to Him.
When we receive him into our lives...
When we say yes to him.

Whatever language we choose to use.

The Admin angel gets to work.
Our names our written in the book of life.

The Father commits to us...

And through the Holy Spirit, He and Jesus takes up dwelling in our lives.

We become carriers of His presence.

The consequence of a normal Christian life is that we carry the presence of God with us.

It should be a normal consequence of the Christian life that we experience the reality of His presence.

That we receive glimpses, tasters, of what will be fulfilled as described in the final chapter of Revelation.

And that should be a source of great peace and hope in our lives.

Amen!