

Traditional Home service Sunday 29th May

OPENING PRAYER

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

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us:

*Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, 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 (*Crown Him with Many Crowns*)

READINGS - Acts 16.16-34
Revelation 22.12-21
John 17.20-26

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 (*The Church's One Foundation*)

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 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

3 Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified;
no angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends their burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

4 Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

1 The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the Word.
From heav'n he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

2 Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth;
her charter of salvation:
one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.

3 The Church shall never perish.
Her dear Lord to defend,
to guide, sustain, and cherish,
is with her to the end.
Tho' there be those that hate her
and strive to see her fail,
against both foe and traitor
she ever shall prevail.

4 Tho' with a scornful wonder
the world sees her oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping;
their cry goes up, "How long?"
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

5 'Mid toil and tribulation
and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.

Sermon - Dawn Bell

Acts 16 16-34 - Breaking the chains

So today I am speaking on the reading from Acts 16 16-34 written by Luke. I am going to take you through the story of Paul, Silas and the slave girl. I will be focussing this week on discipleship and baptism.

To give you some background for today's reading, Paul is on the second of his three missionary journeys. He is in Philippi, and he visits a place of prayer, there he and his companions meet a slave girl. Apparently, she was quite good at predicting the future and brought home a lucrative profit for her owners.

Now Acts is from the New Testament which shows in lots of its scriptures the ability of various spirits and demons to recognise Jesus, even when others (like the disciples) are clueless. Here, in Acts Luke describes a demon properly identifying Paul and Silas as slaves of God. The slave girl would follow Paul and cry out, 'These men are slaves of the Most high God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation' (verse 17). Paul becomes annoyed with the slave girls as she appears to be stalking him, and he exorcizes the spirit from within her, (as in verse 18) he says '***In the name of Christ. I command you to come out of her***'. Her owners were not at all happy about this. Things then began get ugly, and the crowd riots, Paul and Silas are accused of disturbing the peace and of being Jews, and they are stripped, beaten, and flogged and thrown into prison without a trial despite the fact that to do so is illegal as Paul is a Roman citizen. Their feet are then put into stocks for hours on end, they are unable to get up and stretch their legs either. I can't imagine how they felt I mean it's bad enough isn't it when we go on a long journey.

My worst experience of not been able to move was on a flight to America. I knew that because of my fibromyalgia I would suffer with leg pain during the flight, but I have never experienced pain like it was that day. I was trapped in by someone next to me who was sleeping so I couldn't get out to move. I got upset eventually when I could get up, I took my strong painkillers and went to the back of the aircraft where there

was more room to move, and I walked round and round in a circle to ease the pain.

I think it's safe to say though that I didn't suffer like Paul did, he couldn't get up and walk around like I could, and he didn't have pain killers either, probably only a small supply of water. What we do know is that Paul and Silas in their time of pain took great delight in praying and singing hymns. I do wonder how we would react in that situation. Would we have doubted Gods call and thought we must have got things wrong, because if it was Gods will, then why would we be in such a horrible situation? Would we have been able to sit praying and singing hymns? But Paul and Silas seemed to keep singing and praying. Maybe I would have done well to have remembered to pray when I was in pain on the plane!

Discipleship is costly and if we want to follow Christ, we may well experience times in our lives that are difficult. How will we react? Do we have the strength to be like Paul and Silas? Will we praise and worship God despite the circumstances? Not always easy to do that when bad things happen is it? I was fortunate during my times of struggles to have loving church family in Bozeat that helped and encouraged me. They helped me recognise that if we have Jesus in our hearts, we have the strength to overcome and endure those testing times and come through the other end a stronger and better person. I am sure most of us here today have been through some sort of time of worry, anxiety, grief, or even illness. We have strength in numbers as a church family together and we can turn our lives around when things are going wrong for us. We do that by knowing God loves us and he is with us no matter what we have said or done, he's there guiding us encouraging us, even through other people, through our friends and family who care about us and love us. We must also rejoice, and praise God as Paul and Silas did. When we unite as one church family like this morning, we are bringing Glory to God through our praise and worship. Paul talks about that in his letter to the Romans.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus

had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews^[b] on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed ⁹ and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

To unite as one, we are loving and caring about each other. We as a church family all have the same purpose which is to serve God. In order to fulfil that, we are taught by God through endurance to be his disciple and share his word, love one another, accept each person for who they are, please our neighbours for their good, to build them up

Paul and Silas only had each other in jail, but they prayed, and they sang. Verse 26 of our reading goes on to say ***'Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"***

The jailer was about to kill himself as he thought everyone would have escaped and he would get the blame, but Paul shouted to him Don't harm yourself we are all here. The jailer and his family then became Christians and were baptised. You see prayer and praise brings release to those around us. We may not experience an earthquake, but the shackles of the devil will fall off people as they experience the power of the Holy Spirit. When we look at ourselves and our discipleship, how are we going to use the time God has given us here in our village? Are we going to look at the impossibility of some tasks and despair, or are we simply going to TRUST GOD for the solution and keep on praising and worshipping him like Paul and Silas did?

My church family helped me see that I could trust God and I was baptised again as an adult. My baptism was my public declaration that I am

a follower of Jesus Christ. It was my confession of my faith in and commitment to Jesus Christ. It was my next step after salvation through repentance and faith as baptism is an important foundation for Christian life. I have buried the old life and risen to walk in a new life. I see baptism as a symbol of the commitment I made in my heart, a commitment that has to be followed through and lived on a daily basis.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Baptism didn't make me a believer; it showed I was already one. Baptism doesn't save us, only our faith in Christ does that. Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9 says ***"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."***

Only a belief in Christ will give us that Grace from God. Let me tell you a story told by Rev Martin Dale that I found

There is an ancient legend about Jesus' ascension into heaven. He is met by the angel Gabriel, who asks him, "Now that your work is finished, what plans have you made to ensure that the truth that you brought to earth will spread throughout the world?"

Jesus answered, "I have called some fishermen and tax-collectors to walk along with me as I did my Father's will." "Yes, I know about them," said Gabriel, "but what other plans have you made?"

Jesus replied, "I taught Peter, James and John about the kingdom of God; I taught Thomas about faith; and all of them were with me as I healed and preached to the multitudes."

Gabriel replied. "But you know how unreliable that lot was. Surely you must have other plans to make sure your work was not in vain."

Jesus quietly replied to Gabriel "I have no other plans. I am depending on them!! "

So: You are God's plan A and he has no plan B!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen