

Traditional Home service Sunday 14th August

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

*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 (Abide with Me; Fast Falls the Eventide)

READINGS - Isaiah 5.1-7
Hebrews 11.29 - 12.2
Luke 12.49-56

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 (Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus)

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 Abide with me, fast falls the
eventide
The darkness deepens Lord, with me
abide
When other helpers fail and comforts
flee
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with
me

2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little
day
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass
away
Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with
me

3 I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to
bless
Ills have no weight, and tears no
bitterness
Where is death's sting?
Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me

4 Hold Thou Thy cross before my
closing eyes
Shine through the gloom and point
me to the skies
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's
vain shadows flee
In life, in death, o Lord, abide with me
Abide with me, abide with me

1 Hail, O once-despised Jesus!
Hail, O Galilean King!
You have suffered to release us,
hope to give and peace to bring.
Hail, O universal Savior,
bearer of our sin and shame;
by your merits we find favor:
life is given through your name.

2 Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,
all our sins were on you were laid;
by almighty love anointed,
you have full atonement made.
Ev'ry sin has been forgiven
through the power of your blood;
open is the gate of heaven,
we are reconciled to God.

3 Jesus, heav'nly hosts adore you,
seated at your Father's side.
Crucified this world once saw you;
now in glory you abide.
There for sinners you are pleading,
and our place you now prepare,
ever for us interceding
till in glory we appear.

4 Worship, honour, pow'r, and
blessing,
you are worthy to receive;
loudest praises, without ceasing,
right it is for us to give.
Help, O bright angelic spirits,
all your noblest anthems raise;
help to sing our Savior's merits,
help to chant Immanuel's praise.

Sermon - Louise Morton
Hebrews 11 v29 - 12 v 2 Luke 12 49-56

My maternal grandmother my Nan! Really struggled with this passage from Luke!
For her family bonds were the most important thing, thinking about family, loving family were what completely dominated her life and thinking. Jesus saying he would bring family strife and divisions was not something she wanted to hear or understand.
It caused her faith to falter, her belief to waver, her mind to close about faith matters, I think.

In his day people did not find Jesus teaching easy, he said things that stirred up hearts, that caused confusion, he deliberately seemed to want his followers to keep going with him even though they were confused, perplexed, lacking understanding.

He wanted I think to draw out their trust and faith, to encourage them to keep going even though much was mystery. To want relationship with him above all else.

When John sends some of his followers to ask from prison are you the one, or shall we expect someone else?

Jesus answer includes a summary of all he is doing!

Then : And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.

Because we won't always get what we want!

To be a follower of Jesus this no offence, is so key! In this life none of us are going to fully grasp what's going on in some passages of scripture, all of us will have things happen in life that are perturbing, maybe truly dreadful, and certainly beyond our understanding.

We need to resist taking offence, to trust his kindness.

I know Adrian has recently mentioned Bill Johnson's sermon delivered about a week after the death of his beloved wife Beni, I thoroughly recommend it too.

He speaks of the necessity of a childlike faith, that enables living with mystery.

A back slider heart he says, will always judge God for what he didn't do, but those who run with tenderness toward him, will trust his goodness in the face of loss and pain.

Lord keep us tender! And without offence ! Child like....

In this Luke passage, Jesus says he's under stress! He alludes to what he knows is coming and sees the hardships and suffering ahead, my Nan never seemed concerned about this part! He wants the crowd to understand the season they are in, a season of colossal spiritual shift! The old covenant, about to be superseded by the new, a whole new order of things on the

horizon, brought about by his broken body, by his shed blood.....

I love this line : why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Or message version: what God season are we in right now?

Return to this later!

Want to first look with you at the marvellous passage from Hebrews: William Barclay gave it a great endorsement! The beginning of chapter 12 he said, one of the great, moving passages of the New Testament; and in it the writer has given us a well nigh perfect summary of the Christian life!

In this very well known chapter 11, here are described an array of people with faith, who as it repeatedly says " by faith " kept going and remained, those who have served the purposes of God in their generation, as we prayed a few weeks back. Those who have chosen not to be offended! Who have kept trusting in the face of adversity, and what adversity! Some stories of escape from fire and sword, others tortured, stoned etc...with no rescue.

William Barclay sees the writer of Hebrews in the unnamed ending part, referring to some horrific events recorded in maccabees when in around 170 BC Jerusalem was captured by Antiochus, Antiochus attempted to suppress the Jewish faith in the most hideous of ways, and there are recorded stories of those who kept faithful, even unto excruciating death, eventually freedom was regained by Judas Maccabaeus and those who fought with him.

Another commentator wonders if the passage alludes to the horrific goings on towards Christians done by emperor Nero, and even the death of Paul himself.....thought to have been just around the time Hebrews was written.

I probably preferred the idea of those in maccabees, as it seems to make more sense with what is written next!

In a sense it makes no difference, the idea is here, that some suffer for their faith and are miraculously rescued, while others keep faithful experiencing no rescue.

Both are equally valid faith journeys! All part of the same great story, and that's important to hold on to.

And..... Then comes the birth of Christ, the something better, God had provided, so that they not without us, would be made perfect,

Read again 12 v1-2.

Remember using this passage once before and attempting an American Y'All !

The idea we are part of a great journey with those who have gone before and those who will come after! Like a relay race each lap counts and one builds on another! Let's not step out of our lane !

The cloud of witnesses, are those who have already passed on the baton, then stay to cheer on the next lap, and the next.....

They are also witnesses in the sense that their lives of faith can witness to us, encourage us to keep going.

Where we don't go with this, is talking to them! As Bill Johnson says in his sermon, don't be stupid! We may admire, we may love those we know who've died faithful, our focus has to be Jesus the pioneer and perfecter, we leave them with him, we entrust them to him. It is He we consult! The Holy Spirit who we ask to guide us..... or we are taking ourselves into troubled waters.

Conscious of eternity, what is needed from us is holiness and endurance, it's serving his purpose in our generation, our lap if you continue the race analogy!

Message translation words it: we'd better get on with it!

I love this phrase!

To run well we need to be rid of stuff we don't need, things might distract us, turn us off course, message words it parasitic sins, a parasite takes the goodness! It weakens us, no one is stronger with parasites!

Thinking about these things as parasites I think, Helps us see the sense of what needs to go! Why would I want fleas or worms!

The steadfast endurance isn't a kind of patience that just sits down and accepts what ever! It's Hupomone, it's a patience that masters a situation, it's determination.

And Jesus is both our example, the goal of our journey, and our companion on the way!

Will Barclay: the wonder of the Christian life is that we press on surrounded by the saints, oblivious to everything but the glory of the goal and forever in the company of him who has already made the journey and reached the goal, and who waits to welcome us when we reach the end.

Good stuff!

So to come back to Luke and finish by thinking about the season...

Jesus says to those listening you can foretell the weather by reading the sky, the way the wind is etc..

How much more important is it that you read the God season, for them momentous events about to occur, the messiah was in their midst, they were missing what was truly occurring, stuck in offence and disbelief.

CS Lewis in mere Christianity describes the coming of Christ like this: the inconceivable, the uncreated, the thing from beyond nature, striking down into nature like lightning....

They missed this.

Colossians 1V19-20: Paul writes this about Jesus: For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

The most colossal God season of all and they missed it!

I got to thinking... what a good prayer...

Lord show us the God season, help us interpret the time we are in.

See three ways of looking/ asking about this, There is a global God season...

There is a God season we are in as church in this place right now...

There is a personal God season, for us in our journey different stages ...

However, all seasons now shaped by the victory of the Son, however dark, dark times may seem, His victory on the cross should mean Hope can come in.

Even in mourning, Hope can be present, 1 Thess 4v13 lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

And our hope is not like a worldly fingers crossed sort of hope! It's a joyful anticipation of good!

Earlier in Colossians Paul writes about the Hope contained in the gospel that is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world....

Think of the promise from Romans 8 that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Last week I did a bit of gardening I do enjoy it!

Clearing what I saw as weeds around a rose I came across a walnut tree!

I guess the walnut buried by a squirrel had germinated in this incredibly dry time because of my hap hazard rose watering!

It's now in a pot, ... the driest of times can produce unlikely fruit! I was Very excited!

Whatever the season we can have Hope.

Adrian and I are about to go away for two

weeks, bit of homework for all of us 😊, or for

holiday pondering depending on where we'll be!

what season are we in as church right now?

What season are you in personally with Him?

Papers to take away, box for feedback from listening about church....

And if you listen and hear about your personal season, keep your paper, you may want to chat and pray about what you've heard... you may just want explore it further with Him.

Obviously you can pray about our global God season as well, but I have no hand out for that!

Remember because of Jesus there's always a walnut there somewhere! And if there isn't it may well be you haven't heard as clearly as you think.....

Pray, and amen