

Service Sunday 22 May 2022

Welcome and time of silent preparation

Opening prayer

Let's join together in these words from Psalm 67 as our opening prayer.

¹ May God be merciful and bless us.

May his face smile with favor on us.

² **May your ways be known throughout the earth,
your saving power among people everywhere.**

³ May the nations praise you, O God.

Yes, may all the nations praise you.

⁴ **Let the whole world sing for joy,
because you govern the nations with justice
and guide the people of the whole world.**

⁵ May the nations praise you, O God.

Yes, may all the nations praise you.

⁶ **Then the earth will yield its harvests,
and God, our God, will richly bless us.**

⁷ Yes, God will bless us,

and people all over the world will fear him.

Jesus is Lord, creation's voice proclaims it R&S 268

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
for by his power each tree and flower
was planned and made.

Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it—
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: 'Jesus is Lord!'

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise Him with hallelujahs
for Jesus is Lord!*

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding,
yet gave His life a ransom thus setting us free.

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
from death he rose and all his foes
shall own his name.
Jesus is Lord! God sent his Holy Spirit
showing by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

David J. Mansell.

Prayer of thanks and confession

Generous God, you shower us with blessings big and small. Each one is an expression of your love and care for us. This day we give our thanks to you for our family, our friends, for our church, for the world we live in. Today we give our thanks to you for the gift of good health, for the joy of music and art, for learning new skills and for your presence with us.

Generous God, you shower us with blessings big and small. Thank you for your love and care. Amen.

Lord, whenever our own wants and desires obscure the needs of others, forgive us.

Whenever we forget who is our neighbour, forgive us.

Whenever we pass by on the other side, forgive us.

Whenever we forget to say "well done", forgive us.

Whenever we forget the path we tread, forgive us.

For all those times we bring sorrow to your heart, draw us back into your forgiving arms and teach us once again your way.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Lord's prayer

Children and families talk

Lord I lift your name on high WF 66

Lord I lift Your name on high
Lord I love to sing Your praises
I'm so glad You're in my life
I'm so glad You came to save us

You came from heaven to earth to show the way
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky
Lord I lift Your name on high

Rick Founds

Prayer before children leave

Loving God we ask you to bless the children and leaders as they spend time together this morning learning more about you and your love. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Offering and prayer

God of grace and mercy, thankful for all your love, we bring our gifts and offer ourselves to follow Jesus and obey his commands. Take these gifts of money and of ourselves and use them to spread your love, peace and hope in our world. Amen.

Reading - John 14:23-29

Talk 1 – The promise of the Holy Spirit

This passage occurs as part of Jesus' farewell preparations with his disciples on the evening before his death. The disciples are anxious and confused about what is going to happen to Jesus. Immediately before the verses we heard this morning Jesus seeks to

reassure and encourage the disciples by promising them he will send another Advocate, the Spirit of truth, to be with them forever and promising he will not abandon them as orphans.

Just before the start of our reading a question is asked by Judas (not Iscariot) to Jesus about why Jesus is going to reveal himself to the disciples and not to the rest of the world. Jesus says that if anybody loves him they will follow his teaching and that he and the Father will come and make their home with them. This is an amazing promise of life in constant relationship with God through Jesus, a deep and personal relationship here and now, in the present, not waiting until the coming of God's kingdom.

It's through the Holy Spirit that Jesus will continue to be present with his followers. The Holy Spirit will teach us and remind us of the things Jesus did. Because of Jesus' continued presence with us through the Holy Spirit, Jesus encourages us not to be anxious or troubled.

We see Jesus giving the disciples a double blessing of peace and power to encourage them in their future efforts to share God's love with all people. We are Jesus' followers now and we too can be blessed with the enduring peace and power of God. This reminds us of the appearance of the newly risen Jesus to the disciples in the locked room when he also blessed them with peace and gave them a foretaste of the Holy Spirit as he prepared them to step out and continue his work of bringing the good news to all people.

Let's look a bit closer at what Jesus says and what we can know about the Holy Spirit

He describes the Spirit as the Advocate – the Spirit will support us and make our case to God as our trusted friend. The Spirit will guide us and help us to grow in our understanding of the things that Jesus said and did so that our faith will grow in strength. The Holy Spirit continues to make known to us the love of God where we are in our daily lives.

God is personally involved and present with us through the power of the Spirit and the presence of the Spirit with us means we can experience the deep shalom peace of God. The Spirit assures us that we are never abandoned even in the midst of pain or loss. Because of this assurance and this presence of the Spirit with us we can face circumstances and challenges without fear or being perturbed.

It is only with time and prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit that we begin to see how God might be working for good even in the midst of terrible and confusing events.

So how might the presence of the Holy Spirit with us help to shape our lives and our service for God? We'll look more closely at that in a moment.

All over the world the Spirit is moving WF 3

All Over The World, The Spirit Is Moving
All Over The World As The Prophet Said It Would Be
All Over The World There's A Mighty Revelation
Of The Glory Of The Lord, As The Waters Cover The Sea

All Over His Church God's Spirit Is Moving
All Over His Church As The Prophet Said It Would Be
All Over His Church, There's A Mighty Revelation
Of The Glory Of The Lord, As The Waters Cover The Sea

Right Here In This Place, The Spirit Is Moving
Right Here In This Place As The Prophet Said It Would-Be
Right Here In This Place, There's A Mighty Revelation
Of The Glory Of The Lord, As The Waters Cover The Sea

Roy Turner

Talk 2 The Spirit in Action

Have you ever tried to travel somewhere or to do something only to encounter 1 obstacle after another which prevents you from achieving what you've set out to do? Perhaps you were trying to travel somewhere for work or to go on holiday. Or you'd planned a special activity that you'd worked hard to prepare and all your efforts seem to be wasted. You end up not sure which way to turn or what to do next. Paul and his companions had exactly this experience and we're going to hear more about that now.

Reading – Acts 16: 6-15

In the passage we find Paul and Silas wandering from place to place but wherever they end up something stops them from doing what they most want to do – share the good news of God's love through Jesus. We're told they have been prevented in some way by the Holy Spirit from preaching God's word. Eventually they arrive in Troas where Paul has a vision in which he sees a man from Macedonia begging Paul to come over and help them. Convinced that God is calling them to go and preach the good news in Macedonia, Paul sets off immediately in response.

So Paul and Silas arrive in Macedonia and find their way to Lydia's prayer gathering by the river. It seems that Lydia is the head of her household. She is an independent business woman and not necessarily a widow. She is also a worshiper of God who leads her household in worship on the Sabbath. Paul speaks with Lydia and the women gathered there and we're told that God opened Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message and she and her household go on to be baptized.

From these experiences of Paul we can discover important truths about how God's Spirit works and creates opportunities to share the good news.

- If we see our work for God seemingly meeting obstacles, this may be an indication that God has other plans for where we need to be and how we need to serve God.
- God's Spirit sometimes speaks through frustrating and difficult circumstances which require our patient and faithful efforts to discern the will of God
- We need to be alert to the presence of God with us through the Holy Spirit and open to the ways that the Spirit may reach out to us
- The vision received by Paul was powerful and carried urgency in its appeal and Paul and his companions responded without hesitation. And yet there were not instant results. Once they had reached Philippi there was a time of waiting before anything

much happened. God's mission proceeds at the pace dictated by God and requires patience from us.

- Ultimately, God is in charge of our mission plans, God sets its direction and God determines its results

We can also find in this passage some pointers on how and where to meet with and reach people and share with them the news about Jesus' life and love.

- We may have plans about the particular people we want to reach and who we think will respond to our outreach but we can never be certain about how God's Spirit will move and who will be touched. The first person to respond to Paul's message was a woman – Lydia – which was probably not the expected outcome.
- Perhaps there is something in the experience of Lydia and her family which shows the importance of people hearing the good news in their own context where they live and work and gather.
- There is something here about the importance of building relationships with people not necessarily in a church-based activity or location but by gathering in small groups in a place where people feel comfortable and at ease eg at somebody's home.

Where do we see God's Spirit at work in the life and mission of our church – guiding us to areas of need and enabling us to reach out with God's love and hope? Our Needles and natter group which is led by Joyce is growing in numbers of people attending – most of whom are not connected with the church. This is clearly meeting a need among those who come along to socialize. The Toddlers group run by Sandy and a team of volunteers is also growing – so much so that they now have to meet in the church on a Monday morning as there are too many people for Caley Hall. Let's give thanks to God for blessing and growing these activities.

What new opportunities are we exploring to see whether they are part of God's plan for our continued outreach? Last Wednesday morning we started a weekly Drop In session at the church for anyone to come along and enjoy a cuppa and a chat. There was a good response from church people but also a few not connected with the church. Let's pray that God will also bless this outreach and give us patience and perseverance in the weeks ahead.

In our readings this morning from John and Acts we see the promised guiding power of the Holy Spirit in action. Through the presence of the Spirit living in us, and whenever we are attuned to God and make ourselves available, we will be led at the right time into the right circumstances where we can be best used to achieve God's purpose.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

God is working his purpose out R&S 573

God is working his purpose out,
as year succeeds to year;
God is working his purpose out,
and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled

with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

From utmost east to utmost west,
where human feet have trod,
by the voice of many messengers
goes forth the voice of God:
'Give ear to me, you continents,
you islands give ear to me,
that the earth may be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea'.

What can we do to work God's work,
to prosper and increase
love and justice throughout the world,
the reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea?

Let us go out in the strength of God,
with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth
may shine throughout the world:
sin and sorrow let us fight
to set their captives free,
that the earth may be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

All that we do can have no worth
unless God blesses the deed;
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide
till God awakens the seed;
yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Arthur C. Ainger.

Prayers of intercession

I the Lord of sea and sky WF 41

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,

I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them,
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?
Daniel Schutte

Closing blessing

May God's Spirit live in you and sustain you.
May God's Spirit guide you in all your words and actions
May God's Spirit lead you into new opportunities for service.

The Grace

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