

Dear friends,

For those of you unable to join with us at Bethesda Chapel at present, we are looking to provide you with an outline of the service so that you too can feel a part of the church family. Please let us know if you find this outline helpful, or think of ways in which it can be improved.

Thank you.

Sunday August 16th 2020

Our time of worship is led by Tim Doggart, and Joy Ashton is playing the piano for us today.

Welcome- Tim

You may now wish to join in singing In Christ alone, a sing familiar to most of us and shown on the screen at Bethesda, or you may wish read the words aloud or in the silence of your heart.

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song:
this Cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save:
till on that Cross as Jesus died
the wrath of God was satisfied-
for every sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious day
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from His hand -

till He returns or calls me home
here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

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There are two birthdays this week, Shirley and Jane, so we are now going to sing our Happy Birthday song to them both.

Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday Jane and Shirley,
Happy birthday to you,

Happy birthday to you,
only one will not do,
give your heart to the Saviour,
and then you'll have two.

Happy birthday to you,
from old friends and new,
The Lord bless you and keep you,
Happy birthday to you.

Tim leads us in a short reflection, before Joy plays "The Servant King" that you may wish to sing aloud or read the words.

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served but to serve,
and give Your life that we might live.
*This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not My will but Yours, ' He said.
This is our God, the Servant King....

Come see His hands and His feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice;
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.
This is our God, the Servant King....

So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone Him;
each other's needs to prefer
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King....

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We'll now spend some time in prayer, led by Alec.

Good morning everybody,

We have I believe as individuals and as a fellowship greatly benefited from the meditations brought to us by Beryl under the title of "Jesus Calling" which have been so creatively accompanied by Graham.

So I am not scared of sharing our prayers this morning in the form of a meditation.

Please do not misunderstand me brothers and sisters, dear friends but two weeks ago as I was leading the service the longer I preached the worse I felt. Looking at a sea of expressionless masks.

This week in my preparation I have been reminded of a German song which goes like this. I will read it first in German and then add my informal English translation and then we will pray together.

Wir tragen viele Masken und haben kein Gesicht
Wir sprechen eine Sprache, verstehen einander nicht
Wir leben in der Fülle, und sind im Herzen leer
Wir sehnen uns nach Stille, ertragen sie nicht mehr
Wir leben in dem Glaube die Welt gehöre uns
Doch selbst die Luft die wir einatmen, geben wir zurück
Wir suchen tausend Sonnen, und sind doch ohne Licht
Wir rühmen unsere Freiheit, und haben sie doch nicht
Wir dienen vielen Göttern, und sind so fern von Gott
Wir spotten mit dem Munde, und in uns brennt die Not
Ja einer kennt die Namen und weiß wie es uns geht
Ja er spricht eine Sprache die jedermann versteht
Er gibt uns aus der Fülle die er geschaffen hat
Und schenkt uns eine Stille, durch seine große Gnad.

We wear many masks but we have no face
We all speak the same language but we do not understand each other
In our lives we have everything we want but not really what we need
We long for peace and quiet but we can't cope when we experience it
We think the world belongs to us but we have to give back even the air that we breathe
We seek after enlightenment but we have no light in our lives
We are proud of the freedom we have, but in reality we are not free
We serve many gods, yet are a very long way from the true God
We mock and ridicule with our mouths but our hearts have desperate needs
Yes there is somebody who knows our names and knows about the realities of our lives
Yes He speaks a language that everybody can understand
He gives us from His unlimited resources everything we need
In and through his amazing grace He gives us His deep peace, a peace that passes all understanding

Let us pray.

Father God, in our emptiness we come to you. You know us each one for you are the God who made us. You know our needs-for you are the God who is continually shaping and remaking us in the image of your Son. "We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the

Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2. Cor. 3:18)

Open up our hearts and minds to hear your voice. Make our wills obedient to you in the spiritual desert of our struggling little town. We have enough rain but we need living water. Open up the hearts and minds of the leaders of our town and its communities to see how great you are, to see who you are, to be willing to seek and follow you. Give wisdom to all in this town who are responsible for making decisions and establishing priorities which impact on the life of its people and on its churches and fellowships. May your Name be honoured in this town. Let us not fear. Let us not be afraid. Let us not be discouraged. We are not isolated. We are not ashamed. Coronavirus will not be with us forever. But YOU WILL!!! For you, the LORD our God will be with us wherever we go.

We remember those in our fellowship who are in dire need of medical assistance and attention, who are waiting for tests, waiting for test results, waiting for operations. Heavenly Father you know the needs of each one. We thank you that we have the assurance that you are leading and providing. Your Will be done in the hearts and lives of each one of us.

We thank you that you have answered our prayers concerning the results of school and other important examinations in our society. That governments throughout the United Kingdom have been prepared to move and to change in the face of real needs. We pray that you would continue graciously to lead in the lives of our young people in all UK countries, making yourself known and receiving all the honour due to you.

Loving heavenly Father there are no words on our lips or in our hearts that can begin to express our sadness and sometimes even despair at the loss of lives, at the appalling conditions, at the desperate states of affairs, at the great tragedies that are being experienced almost daily in so many countries in your world. Please be merciful to those who need mercy. Be with those who suffer and with those who give their lives to help those who are suffering. You know and you care. Please act for the sake of the honour of your Name. Show your face in the midst of the tragedies of this broken world.

We pray all these things in the Name of Jesus Christ your Son who gave His life that we might live.

Amen

Tim shares the notices with us, before we read our Scripture passage for this week, Galatians 6, verses 1-10. entitled: *Doing good to all*

¹ Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Tim now shares his message.

Introduction

We've come to the last chapter of Galatians. Reminding ourselves of what we've learned:

- Paul was really concerned by the false teachers plaguing the Galatian churches trying to persuade people that something more than faith in Christ was needed for salvation – Paul says ‘No!’ very firmly on many occasions and in many ways – hopefully we’ve got the message!
- When we come to Jesus in simple faith in his completed work, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live differently and develops the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christ, in us as we saw at the end of chapter 5

Paul now turns from teaching these principles to practical application – what should this look like in our lives? He gives us four scenarios:

1. **Relating** to each other’s struggles (verses 1 and 2)
2. **Recognising** our own standing (verses 3 to 5)
3. **Responding** to those to teach us God’s Word (verse 6)
4. **Reacting** to being in a spiritual battle (verses 7 to 10)

Relating to Each Other’s Struggles (v 1,2)

The scenario here is someone who has been tripped up or taken by surprise by unintended sin (v1). This can happen to us all (v2), and our response is thus to be one of gently (v1) seeking to restore (like setting a broken bone) and help the one who has gone astray. In so doing, we help to carry each other’s burdens (v2). The legalisers that Paul was so angry at would not work in this way – they would view someone else’s struggles as an opportunity to make themselves look good, and not as one to help with somebody else’s burden - like the Pharisees whom Jesus criticised in Matthew 23: 2-5. The great example of what is intended is, as ever, the Lord Jesus. Consider how he dealt with the woman caught in adultery (John 8: 1- 11). His response was not violent, nor condoning the wrongdoing, but an extension of love and grace, and the encouragement to change. We need to ask for God’s wisdom in such situations, as we all seek to help one another in our struggles with sin, and in so doing, we fulfil the law of Christ, the law of love and grace (Matthew 22: 36-40). We can’t do this without the Holy Spirit’s help.

Recognising Our Own Standing (v 3-5)

It’s all too easy for us to think of ourselves more highly than we should, particularly (v4) if we start comparing ourselves to others. ‘At least I’m not like that!’ If we do this, Paul says (v3) we are deceiving ourselves, but we can’t deceive God – he knows exactly what we are like. When Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the Temple in Luke 18: 9-14, the Pharisee had the sort of attitude Paul is warning against here, while the tax collector assessed his state realistically and cried out to God for help. We should evaluate ourselves in that way, using God’s word as the yardstick. We can only do this for ourselves, not for others – there are some things we can only do for ourselves (v5). The word for ‘load’ in this verse is different from the one in verse 2, so there’s no contradiction in what Paul says. The word in verse 5 is the kind of word that would have been used for a soldier’s pack, for which the soldier could not pass on responsibility to others. Let us weigh up our own standing before God realistically, not in comparison to others, and ask for his help to change where we need to.

Responding to Those Who Teach Us (v 6)

The first two sections related to shared burdens – now Paul turns to shared blessings. First, he encourages us to share blessings with those who teach us from God’s Word. They help us to understand the spiritual treasure trove that’s found in the Bible and how valuable this is to us, so Paul says it’s right in turn that we share material blessings with them. Pastors deserve their pay! But we can also share encouragement, appreciation and stories of how God is working in our lives through his word. How much do we go out

of our way to do that? If we give to others in this way, we'll find we are blessed as we do so, an example of the principle of sowing and reaping that Paul goes on to explain further in the last section.

Reacting to Being in a Spiritual Battle (v 7-10)

We saw in chapter five the description of the battle that all Christians face between the things of the Spirit and the things of the sinful human nature or 'flesh', which are in a tug of war for influence in our lives (chapter 5 verse 17). And we 'reap what we sow' - the kind of outcome we see will depend on what we invest in - the things of the flesh, or the things of the Spirit. Everything we do in life belongs to one or the other – the key question is the one Paul effectively asks in these verses: 'Who are we trying to please?' If we are sowing to please the Holy Spirit and doing the good works which he has prepared in advance for us to do (see Ephesians 2 verse 10), then, even if we don't see the outcomes immediately, God promises us blessings in due time – so this is an encouragement to patience and not to give up when things seem tough.

We bring our time together to a close as we sing or read 'O Church arise', which is being shown on the screen at Bethesda.

O Church, arise, and put your armour on;
hear the call of Christ our Captain.
For now the weak can say that they are strong
in the strength that God has given.
With shield of faith and belt of truth,
we'll stand against the devil's lies;
an army bold, whose battle-cry is Love,
reaching out to those in darkness.

Our call to war, to love the captive soul
but to rage against the captor;
and with the sword that makes the wounded whole,
we will fight with faith and valour.
When faced with trials on every side
we know the outcome is secure,
and Christ will have the prize for which He died,
an inheritance of nations.

Come see the cross, where love and mercy meet,
as the Son of God is stricken;
then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,
for the Conqueror has risen!
And as the stone is rolled away,
and Christ emerges from the grave,
this victory march continues till the day
every eye and heart shall see Him.

So Spirit, come, put strength in every stride,
give grace for every hurdle,
that we may run with faith to win the prize
of a servant good and faithful.

As saints of old still line the way,
retelling triumphs of His grace,
we hear their calls and hunger for the day
when with Christ we stand in glory.

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Benediction, led by Tim.

We trust and pray that God will surround you with his peace this week.