

# 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2022

## The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's

Service set out below.



**Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Song:**

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

## **Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright: We live for the eternal.**

Read. 1 John 2:15-28 and John 5:19-30.

We return to our 1 John series this week. Our passage today builds on the foundation already laid in earlier passages to encourage us to build firm foundations in our own lives.

We are challenged about our love for this ‘world’, yet John himself wrote, ‘God so loved the world...’ (John 3:16). So what does John mean?

James writes, ‘You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.’ (James 4:4).

In this and John’s passage the world is the not the inspiration for our worship of God, but become an object of worship itself. The verse 16, the Message version translates as: ‘Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him.’

God has an eternity of joy on offer to us and the world offers only a fleeting pleasure (:17), why would we settle for less. The cravings of our flesh, eyes, and pride, are not satisfied with anything the ‘world’ offers. We are only truly satisfied in in Jesus. (Read Matthew 6:19-21). Freedom is found in living with God as we were designed to do. Freedom is not found in craving more, and then more, and then still more of the worlds offerings – we are never satisfied, we become addicts, controlled by satisfying our self-indulgent cravings. In reply to the question, ‘How much money is enough?’ John D Rockefeller, perhaps the richest man ever to live said, ‘just a little bit more!’

We are at great risk, ‘What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?’ (Matthew 16:26). Sadly, as the Church, and as individuals, we sometimes think that we can love the world a little bit. Our society needs today see people taking seriously the words of Christ and living faithfully for him.

John continues this thought in writing about the antichrists. The people of God in Jesus’ time were desperate for a Messiah (Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew Messiah) but nervous of fakes and, especially, of those who had evil, fraudulent intent – the antichrists – who would deceive the faithful.

John makes clear that there are those who would peddle their alternative Gospels. In John's time there were particular threats but his words apply to all times. Even today, there are attempts to add to the Gospel, to make it more palatable, denying Jesus' humanity or his divinity, offering fake versions of the real thing. Revelation tells us that the number of the beast, or antichrist, is 666. This is because '7' is seen as the number of perfection. The antichrist offers something nearly like perfection and truth, but cannot achieve the glory of God.

Today we are offered 'love' as the guiding principle by which we should live our lives. This is a 'nearly' offer. It's only a six! God is love and so it would seem to be true that love should be our guide, but God's love is bigger than our transitory feelings and fickle emotions, God's love is true and certain; it has a passion for justice and seeks the very best for us.

Jesus said, that if we loved him we would obey his commands (John 14:15). And John restates this throughout his letter (see, 2:3-6, 9-10; and from 3:11 onwards).

With the mixed messages around John reassures us that we can know the truth. We need to continue in what we have heard (:24), which includes being firm on the person of Jesus Christ (:22-23) and listen to God's Holy Spirit ('anointing', :20 & 27).

We have the huge privilege today of the Bible as a secure guide for truth, a record of what we 'have heard'. Scripture, God's Word, can guide us (See Psalm 119:103-105) and the Spirit will lead us into all truth (John 16:13). So, we need to take time to read and listen to God through his Word, the Bible and to seek to stay close to God, living in obedience to his commands, and listening to his Holy Spirit.

And this is a serious business with eternal consequences. Read John 5:24-29 and, the Message version of verse 28 in our 1 John reading says: 'And now, children, stay with Christ. Live deeply in Christ. Then we'll be ready for him when he appears, ready to receive him with open arms, with no cause for red-faced guilt or lame excuses when he arrives.'

**Prayers:** *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.



**Collect: Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; 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.**

**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.*

**Blessing** to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

**The Notices:** We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 19<sup>th</sup> Oct. at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. at 11am in Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.