

16th 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:

Purify My Heart,
Let Me be as Gold and precious Silver.
Purify My Heart,
Let Me be as Gold, pure Gold.

Refiner's Fire,
My Heart's one desire
Is to be... Holy;
Set apart for You, Lord.
I choose to be... Holy;
Set apart for You, My Master,
Ready to do Your will.

Purify My Heart,
Cleanse Me from within
And make Me Holy.
Purify My Heart,
Cleanse Me from My Sin, deep within.

Refiner's Fire,
My Heart's one desire
Is to be... Holy;
Set apart for You, Lord.
I choose to be... Holy;
Set apart for You, My Master,
Ready to do Your will.

Purify My Heart,
Let Me be as Gold and precious Silver.
Purify My Heart,
Let Me be as Gold, pure Gold.

Refiner's Fire,
My Heart's one desire
Is to be... Holy;
Set apart for You, Lord.
I choose to be... Holy;
Set apart for You, My Master,
Ready to do Your will.

Sermon by Timothy James: We live in purity.

Read. 1 John 2:28-3:10 and John 17:20-26.

I John 2:28 – 3:10: **God's Children and Sin**

²⁸ And now, **dear children**, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called **children of God**! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are **children of God**, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, ^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ **Dear children**, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is **[a child]** of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the **children of God** are and who the **children of the devil** are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not **God's child**, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

This passage sharply contrasts the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of God do right (it says that three times); they are loved by God, and will see him and be like him; they purify themselves; and they do not sin (said twice).

The children of the devil are lawless, they do sin, and they do not love their brothers and sisters.

It's a pretty dramatic black/white contrast.

But what strikes me about the passage is the repeated use of the word “children”: the word (or “child”) is used seven times, and implied many more. So in what sense are we children?

You may know the story of the child in school who is energetically painting a picture; the teacher asks what she is painting, and she answers that she is painting God. The teacher suggests “but we don’t know what God looks like”. The child retorts “well, you will when I’ve finished!”.

Did you watch our children before they left? What were they doing? How did they respond to the service? Did you want to act like them, but refrained because you know how adults are meant to behave?

Consider Jesus’ teaching about children, and how he is more interested in whether we act like them than with how we treat them. (See Matthew 18:3, Mark 9:36-37). Also look at our one account of how Jesus behaved when he was a child (Luke 2:41-52).

Children are honest rather than polite: they ask devastating questions. They will believe much that we tell them (so we had better not tell them any convenient lies), but not everything. My nephew learned the story of Dorcas (Act 9:36-40) at Sunday School; his response was polite but firm unbelief, because “when you’re dead, you’re dead!”. Their doubt is as unstudied as their trust.

They are innocent: they find things surprising, rather than routine, and they delight in this. They wrestle with things that don’t make sense to them, as Jacob wrestled with God.

How, then, should we behave as children of God?

Ask yourself whether you behave like a child, as Jesus demanded.

Ask yourself whether you behave like a child of God, as John defined that.

Moral behaviour matters. I am not going to explain what moral behaviour looks like, because you already know.

Loving behaviour matters, too. If you want to know what that looks like, go to I Corinthians 13.

But what also matters is the spontaneity, honesty, and innocence of the questions you ask, the doubts you wrestle with and the love you give.

Prayer

God our Father, give us the grace to enter your kingdom like little children.

Thank you that you will never reject us for the questions we ask, the doubts we feel or the mistakes we make. Thank you for showing us how you want us to behave: what is pure and what is lawless, what is sinful and what is righteous.

Now help us to behave as your children.

Above all, we rejoice that we are your children because you are our Father.

Amen

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: Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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. 19th Oct. at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26th Oct. at 11am in Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.