**Home Service Sheet Sunday 10th March 2024**

**Call To Worship                  Psalm 107:1-3**

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
    for his steadfast love endures forever!
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
    whom he has redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
    from the east and from the west,
    from the north and from the south.

**Opening Prayer**

O Lord our God, You are good and faithful and Your love endures forever! You have gathered Your people to Yourself from every tribe, nation and language into Your Kingdom. Lord, we praise You for calling us and saving us from our sins. May we bring You the praise and thanksgiving You deserve today, as we proclaim Your truth and obey Your commandments. Help us to understand Your Word and apply it in our lives, we pray. This we ask in Jesus’ Name, amen.

**Hymn                                     To God be the glory**by ***Fanny Crosby***

<https://youtu.be/xil1eXE-OKo?si=Tu5t_W2pdYHS9QW4>

To God be the glory, great things He hath done; so loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, and opened the life gate that all may go in.

***Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.***

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood, to every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,

And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Readings**

**Numbers 21:4-9**

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronzeserpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

**John 3:1-21**

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born againhe cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘Youmust be born again.’The windblows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but youdo not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

**“**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

**Reflection**

Our Bible readings today deal with the thorny issue of sin and God’s wondrous remedy for it. In the not-too-distant past I was filling in a survey in which one of the questions asked, “what do you think is the single biggest problem in the UK today?” I suspect they were looking for answers like unemployment, the state of the health service, knife crime or the environment. I answered rather differently, though, as I don’t believe that any of these issues is as dangerous, wide-spread or catastrophic as sin. Basically, sin is disobedience towards God and rebellion against Him. Every person sins, from the greatest to the least, and the just punishment for that is death.

Our Old Testament reading today tells us about the wanderings of the people of Israel in the wilderness, following their escape from Egypt. We are told that the people became impatient with God and grumbled to Moses about the food that God had provided for them. This is an example of human rebellion against God and His ways, such as we see all around us today. The people sinned against God and there were consequences to this. We read, “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.” (Numbers 21:6) At first this may seem a bit harsh, but we must remember that God is holy and just - He cannot bear sin or let it go unpunished.

Following the people’s recognition of their sin, confession and repentance, Moses interceded (stood in the gap) for them to God. Out of His grace and mercy God provided relief from their calamity in the form of a bronze serpent. As we are told, “if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.” (Numbers 21:9). God stepped in and provided a means of forgiveness and salvation for Israel. This somewhat obscure and unusual passage provides the context to what Jesus says in our New Testament reading from John’s Gospel. Moses was a foreshadowing of Jesus, our great High Priest (see Hebrews 4:14-16) who is ever interceding for us.

Jesus said, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15) Not only is Moses like Jesus, but Jesus is also foreshadowed by the bronze serpent. Jesus was to be lifted up literally on a cruel cross and crucified for us. We are then to look to Him, with faith, and we will be saved and receive eternal life. The Israelites received a temporary reprieve from death as that generation would all die before entering the Promised Land of Canaan. In Christ, through faith in Him, we receive eternal life and will live with God forever. How much greater is Jesus than that bronze serpent!

The longer passage from John’s Gospel sets the scene for what Jesus says in the central few verses of 14 to 17. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to see Jesus to find out more about Him and what He was teaching. Jesus doesn’t directly answer all of Nicodemus’ questions, but He does give Him the answers he needs in order to be saved. The famous verse 16 needs to be read in context. Yes, God does love this world and its people very much, but this does not mean that everyone will be saved. Some are bitten by the serpent of sin and never look to Jesus to be healed and receive eternal life. Verse 18 makes this very clear, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

Salvation from sin and death only comes through what Jesus did for us on the cross. He died in our place, taking upon Himself our sins so that we might be forgiven and counted righteous in God’s sight. We receive this gracious gift of life eternal when we receive the Holy Spirit’s gift of faith. There is literally nothing that we can do to earn salvation for ourselves – it is entirely the work of God for us that we must receive. God’s condemnation comes upon those who do not believe, because they have rejected Him and not looked to Him for salvation. Eternal life is found in Christ alone through faith alone, by grace alone. Amen!

**Prayer**

Gracious God, we thank You that we have been born from above, have become children of God, and have an inheritance kept for us in heaven. Lord, we know that we do not have the greatest knowledge and understanding of Scripture, but we do know that You came down from heaven to die on the Cross to pay the price for our sin. We thank You, Lord Jesus, that You rose again on the third day to break the power of sin in our lives and made us new creations in Christ. Help us to clearly proclaim to other people that the Lord Jesus was raised up that through faith in Him they may receive eternal life. Build Your Church, O Lord, we pray. In Jesus’ Name, amen.

**Benediction**

May the strength of God sustain us; may the power of God preserve us; may the hands of God protect us; may the way of God direct us; may the love of God go with us this day and forever. Amen!

Attachments area

[Preview YouTube video To God Be the Glory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xil1eXE-OKo&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

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