**Home Service Sheet Sunday 11th February 2024**

**Call To Worship                  Psalm 44:1-8**

O God, we have heard with our ears,  
    our fathers have told us,  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
    in the days of old:  
you with your own hand drove out the nations,  
    but them you planted;  
you afflicted the peoples,  
    but them you set free;  
for not by their own sword did they win the land,  
    nor did their own arm save them,  
but your right hand and your arm,  
    and the light of your face,  
    for you delighted in them.

You are my King, O God;  
    ordain salvation for Jacob!  
Through you we push down our foes;  
    through your name we tread down those who rise up against us.  
For not in my bow do I trust,  
    nor can my sword save me.  
But you have saved us from our foes  
    and have put to shame those who hate us.  
In God we have boasted continually,  
    and we will give thanks to your name forever.

**Opening Prayer**

Great are You, Lord, in all Your deeds, and wise are You, O Lord, in all Your words. From the earliest of times, You made Yourself known to humanity and laid bare Your holy arm. In times of trouble, You have protected and saved Your people. To You belongs all the praise, glory and honour! Help us today, O Lord, to keep our focus on You and on all that You have done for us. Grant to us wisdom and understanding as we hear Your Word not just to know what it means, but also to put it into practice. This we ask in Jesus' Name, amen.

**Hymn                                     The Spirit lives to set us free**by ***Damian Lundy***

<https://youtu.be/SDcbYk-9C-Y?si=O4jWHAk-bjnf7Jck>

The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light.

He binds us all in unity, walk, walk in the light.

***Walk in the light, walk in the light, walk in the light,***

***Walk in the light of the Lord!***

Jesus promised life to all, walk, walk in the light.

The dead were wakened by His call, walk, walk in the light.

He died in pain on Calvary; walk, walk in the light.

To save the lost like you and me, walk, walk in the light.

We know His death was not the end, walk, walk in the light.

He gave His Spirit to be our Friend; walk, walk in the light.

By Jesus’ love our wounds are healed, walk, walk in the light.

The Father’s kindness is revealed; walk, walk in the light.

The Spirit lives in you and me, walk, walk in the light.

His light will shine for all to see, walk, walk in the light.

**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 Reading                     Ephesians 5:11-21**

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,

and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**Reflection**

One of the more common contrasts we find in the Bible is that made between light and dark, good and evil. Jesus is the light who came into this world of darkness, and it is through Him that we may walk in the light. Paul, however, in our Bible reading today goes beyond this simple contrast and tells us that we are to take “no part in the unfruitful works of darkness” (v.11). It’s fairly straightforward to say that we are not to do things that are morally wrong, but this takes things a step further. How are we to avoid even taking a small part in such ‘works of darkness’? Do we simply keep well away from those who do those kinds of things, or is it a case of using careful discernment so we don’t cross over the line into these evil deeds?

There is, I believe, a clue in the context of this letter. Primarily, Paul has been speaking both to and about those who are a part of the Church in Ephesus. These are people who would say that they believe in Christ and follow Him. If supposed Christians are taking part in evil deeds then clearly we need to separate from them so that they may be challenged in their sin. This seems to be confirmed when later in verse 11 Paul makes it clear that we are to expose world of darkness. We are to bring what is evil into the light that God has shone upon us. If sin is kept hidden and secret, in the dark, for a period of time it will deaden us and make us ineffective at following Christ. Instead, we are to be alert and awake in Christ, revealing the truth so that those taking part in deeds of darkness would come back into the light of the Gospel.

The quotation that Paul refers to in verse 14 certainly seems quite relevant! “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” This is a wake-up call to all believers who have stumbled into sinful habits and unrepentant sin. If we are asleep to Christ, then we will not inherit eternal life, as Paul has made very clear earlier in this chapter. Therefore, we must heed the call of Christ, wake up and live faithfully and fruitfully for Him. Now that we have been awakened, we need to carry on in our Christian life, walking wisely. I suspect that this indicates that we should be thoughtful and prayerful in the way that we live day by day. God’s Word addresses many specific things, but it also gives us guiding principles for those occasions when we find ourselves in a situation not directly covered by the Bible.

In verse 17, Paul tells the Ephesians to “understand what the will of the Lord is.” It is important that we understand how to recognise God’s will for us. Despite the way that some people make this sound hard to understand, it is in fact fairly simple. Basically, we need to read the Bible carefully and prayerfully, as God has clearly shown us how He wants us to live and what He wants us to do. If we are obeying God’s commands that He has shown us in His Word, then we are walking in God’s will – it is as simple as that! We are to place our faith in Christ, ask God’s forgiveness for our sin as we repent of it and seek to please God through the life that we live. This is the will of God!

Paul also goes on to warm against the dangers of getting drunk on wine (or any other intoxicating substance). We may drink, but we must not overindulge to the point of drunkenness. Instead, we are to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit, whose fruit includes self control. It is also this same Holy Spirit who empowers and enables us to sing in praise of God. This is for the benefit of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as well as for the praise and thanksgiving of God. We must not forsake meeting together (Hebrews 10:25), because if we do how can we encourage one another or sing hymns and spiritual songs to one another?

Our Bible reading today concludes with the following words, “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” This is something we’re not going to look at fully today as it connects this section with the later verses in the chapter, which we will look at next time. Clearly all Christians must submit to God in Christ, but we are also told to submit to others, ‘out of reverence for Christ’. Sometimes we can be all too focussed on our own needs and desires and forget to put the needs of others above our own. We should submit to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than insisting on our own way. It is an expression of love for one another and for God, and by doing this we honour Christ. Amen!

**Prayer**

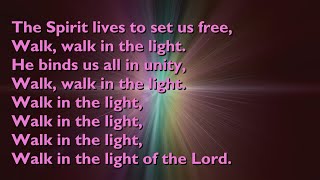
Heavenly Father, we realise that there are times in our lives when we have allowed weariness to overtake us and we have faltered in our Christian journey. Today, Lord, we pray that we would awaken from such spiritual tiredness to walk in newness of life and live in the light of Christ's lovely presence. We pray that we would press on for the high call we have in Christ Jesus and produce the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Help us to honour Your holy name by the lives we live and the attitude of our hearts. Thank You for the many privileges we enjoy as Your children. Help us to live each day according to Your Word and to walk in the light as He is in the light. This we ask for Jesus' sake, amen.

**Benediction**

Thank You, Heavenly Father, for Your unconditional and everlasting love towards us. May we grow more and more to be like You; may You guide and teach us in all that we say and do, so that we may do all things according to Your will. Amen!

Attachments area

[Preview YouTube video The Spirit Lives to Set Us Free (Walk in the Light) [with lyrics for congregations]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDcbYk-9C-Y&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

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