**Home Service Sheet 25th June 2023**

**Call To Worship                 Psalm 86:1-5**

Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
    for I am poor and needy.
Preserve my life, for I am godly;
    save your servant, who trusts in you - you are my God.
Be gracious to me, O Lord,
    for to you do I cry all the day.
Gladden the soul of your servant,
    for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
    abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

**Opening Prayer**

O Lord our God, You alone are the One who has created all things, and sustains them. In the hardest of times we have confidence that we can cry out to You, and You hear our prayers. Today we ask You to remind us of Your great love, grace and mercy towards us in Your Son, Jesus Christ. Show us again the great and mighty deeds that You have done, that are recorded for us in the Scriptures. Draw us into praise and thanksgiving for all that You are and all that You have done. This we ask in the precious name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, amen.

**Hymn                         Great is Thy Faithfulness**by ***Thomas O Chisholm***

[*https://youtu.be/ALHSjbTK\_jE*](https://youtu.be/ALHSjbTK_jE)

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

***Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!***

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

**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                     Romans 6:1-14**

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old selfwas crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.For one who has died has been set freefrom sin.Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

**Reflection**

Paul’s letter to the Romans is probably the most comprehensive explanation of the Gospel and its implications that we find in the New Testament. In most of Paul’s other letters he addresses specific issues, questions and situations that had arisen in that specific Church congregation. It’s not that the other letters don’t contain the Gospel that Paul preached, or work out what that means for believers, because of course they do. However, to understand Paul’s preaching we have to read between the lines in these other letter, but in Romans he gives us a well set out theology of the Gospel.

In chapter 6, Paul writes about the central Gospel idea of the grace of God and what it’s implications truly are. In verse 1 Paul asks the rhetorical question, “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” Clearly some people thought that they should, but Paul quickly shuts down this odd idea with the terse and emphatic comment “By no means”, or “certainly not”. In effect he is making it very clear that there is no room for theological debate here in this matter!

It is because of our sin that Christ Jesus had to die on the cross. Through His death we may be forgiven and saved by grace. If, however, we keep on sinning deliberately, something is horribly wrong. Paul puts it like this in verse 2, asking “How can we who died to sin still live in it?” We need to note that Paul does not say that we who are being saved can live in perfect purity or holiness. Rather, he says that we must not ***live*** in sin. Living in sin is a deliberate course of action where we know something to be wrong but do it anyway (e.g. deliberately cheating in an exam). Making mistakes, or occasionally giving into temptation, is one thing, but that’s not what Paul has in mind here.

Verses 3 to 6 are quite difficult to understand because they refer to something that is both physical and symbolic. The act of baptism is literally a submersion in water, a physical act, but it is also a symbol or sign of something spiritual that happens at the same time. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul puts it like this, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) In Jesus Christ we are made new, and this is illustrated by baptism. We cannot become new creations and not be changed by God.

In verse 7 Paul continues to drive home his point, saying “For one who has died has been set free from sin.” As a result of the fall of humanity that took place in the garden of Eden, we are all born in sin, and continue to sin throughout our lives. It is only in death that we are finally set entirely free. Jesus died for us, and through His death He took the punishment we deserved. By faith we are counted as right before God (righteous) something only Jesus is worthy to be proclaimed. Our old sinful selves died on the cross with Christ, and our new selves are raised with Him to live to His praise and glory.

Paul comes to the practical application in verse 12, writing “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.” We sin, but we do not have to allow sin to reign or rule over us. Rather we are to live for God, or in other words be so focused on Him and His ways that we do not allow ourselves to get caught up in sinful habits any more. Ultimately this is all a gift from God that we do not deserve; it is the grace of God given freely to us by His Son.

Sometimes doing the right thing, or believing the right things can get people into trouble with others. The Gospel is offensive to human thinking because salvation cannot be earned by hard work, money or status. Today it is particularly offensive because it is exclusive. Salvation is found in Christ alone, not through Mohammed, Buddha or Krishna or other religions. God calls us to die to self and live for Him, which also goes against the cultural belief that ‘you’re worth it’ as one hair product manufacturer puts it. To truly follow Christ is to go against the society in which we live, and often that can be very tough to do, and yet God helps us to do that through His grace. Amen!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus died to pay the price for our sins, and thank You that He identified with our sin and became sin for us so that we might be clothed in His righteousness. We praise You for breaking the power of sin in our lives. May we each live to You and for You, O God, and walk in the newness of life that Your Holy Spirit brings to us. Thank You Lord Jesus that You not only died for my sin but You died unto sin - so that we might be empowered to live our lives in Spirit and truth, as we abide in Christ and He in us. May we not just hear this truth, but also act upon it and count our old sinful selves as dead to sin. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

**Benediction**

Gracious God, we thank You for the assurance that we are a part of Your people because of Jesus. May the signs of You presence be increasingly seen in us. Help us to abide in Christ, ever sensitive to His guidance and obedient to His leading. Grant that, strengthened by the power of Your Holy Spirit, we may continue to work in the world, until we come to the glory of the eternal kingdom. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.