**Home Service Sheet for 26th March 2023**

**Call To Worship                  Psalm 40:4-10**

Blessed is the man who makes
    the Lord his trust,
who does not turn to the proud,
    to those who go astray after a lie!
You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
    your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
    none can compare with you!
I will proclaim and tell of them,
    yet they are more than can be told.

In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,
    but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering
    you have not required.
Then I said, “Behold, I have come;
    in the scroll of the book it is written of me:

I delight to do your will, O my God;
    your law is within my heart.”

I have told the glad news of deliverance
    in the great congregation;
behold, I have not restrained my lips,
    as you know, O Lord.

I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;
    I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
    from the great congregation.

**Prayer**

Gracious God, Your wondrous deeds are beyond compare, and Your love for us is beyond our understanding. From the very beginning it has been Your plan and purpose to reconcile a people to Yourself through Your Son, the Lord Jesus, and we thank You for that. You have remained faithful to us even when we have not been faithful to You, and so we praise You for Your grace and mercy towards us. Help us this day to carefully listen to Your Word and obey it as our spiritual act of worship. We ask this in the precious Name of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, amen.

**Hymn                                     How firm a foundation**by ***Author unknown***

<https://youtu.be/OmlyDwtv55Q>

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

What more can He say than to you He has said, all who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

‘In every condition − in sickness, in health, in poverty’s vale, or abounding in wealth;

At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea, as thy days may demand shall thy strength ever be.

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed; I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid:

I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of grief shall not thee overflow:

For I will be with thee in trouble to bless; and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;

The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake, I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!’

**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                    Hebrews 10:1-10**

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
    but a body have you prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings
    you have taken no pleasure.
Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
    as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**Reflection**

Before the release of a new film, musical album or major consumer product there is usually a public announcement, or sometimes a trailer. These communications usually give us an idea of what to expect, without showing us the whole picture of what is to come. Usually these releases are intended to build up our sense of anticipation for the real thing, and the most successful advertising campaigns do just that. I can personally remember all the hype around the launch of the first Apple iPhone smartphone back in 2007, as it was launched during my first holiday in the United States of America. It was all over the news, and although I had no need of such a device I got caught up in the excitement!

In a sense, our Bible reading begins by telling us about all the pre-marketing of the good things that God was doing in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. From the beginning God had a definite plan to save humanity, and through the prophets He revealed this future plan to His people. As we read through the Old Testament today we can see many hints at what God was preparing. Sometimes this would be glimpsed through the good things God did for His people, Israel, which were just a type and shadow of what He would do through His promised Messiah.

Verse 1 of our reading points us towards the way in which the law pointed us towards what was to come. The law shows us that we are all sinners, because we cannot perfectly keep every law all the time. Yet, it doesn’t leave us without hope as it also lays out various sacrifices that can be made to pay the price for sin. However, these sacrifices only atoned for what was past, and needed to be repeated each time people sinned. The sacrifices made by the priests needed to be made time and time and time again, with the shedding of much blood, and the killing of thousands, if not millions of animals. However, this need for ongoing sacrifice was about to be done away with. There was one sacrificial Lamb, whose death would be all-sufficient to pay the price for every sin ever committed by human beings.

The law and its sacrifices prepared the people for what was to come, and for the way in which Jesus would die in our place to reconcile us to God. Verse 5 tells us of Jesus quoting from the Psalms, and specifically Psalm 40, verse 6, “Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.” This is interesting because the law gives us the reason for making such sacrifices to God to pay for our sin. Yet, God’s intent is ultimately to transform us and make us holy, obeying the law out of love for Him and thanksgiving for all that He has done for us in Christ. Obedience is better than sacrifice, or to use the vernacular, ‘prevention is better than cure’.

Verse 7 makes this even clearer to us, “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.” Not only does this show us that Jesus was completely obedient to the Father’s will by dying on the cross for us, but it shows us that this was always God’s plan as this was written in the Psalms hundreds of years before. The prophet Micah has a similar message for us too, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). Sacrifice is not meant to be an excuse for us to keep on sinning!

So, we have seen how the law points us towards our need for Jesus and His all sufficient sacrifice for our sin. Through faith in Him, with repentance, we are reconciled to God and our sins are forgiven. However, that is not the end of the story, or this process that God has put in place. As we read in verse 10, there is a further thing that God intends for us. This is so that we may be “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” We are saved and reconciled in order to become like Jesus, who is perfect in every way. This is a process, but there is an end point, in eternity, where we will be made completely holy through the finished work of Jesus and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit within us. We are not there yet, but we are on the way – thanks be to God! Amen!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You that the Law, which You gave to Israel, was a shadow of better things to come through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You that Jesus is not only our heavenly High Priest but also the sacrificial offering that You accepted as the full and final payment for our sin. Thank You that there is nothing more that we need to do other than believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour Who paid the full price for sin and broke its power in my life forever. Help us to never become complacent about the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus paid for us when He went to the Cross for our sake. We thank You too, O Lord, that we are made holy in and through Christ. Help each of us to abide in Him and He in us so that we may grow in grace and live as You intended humanity to live. Help us in all things to pray, "Not my will but Thine be done." In Jesus' Name we pray, amen.

**Benediction**

Heavenly Father, thank You for saving us from our sin through the all sufficient sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus Christ. May You continue to work within us by Your Holy Spirit, sanctifying us and making us evermore like Your Son. This we ask to Your praise and glory, amen.