**Home Service Sheet Sunday 28th January 2024**

**Call to Worship:**                  **Psalm 15:1-5**

O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?  
    Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

He who walks blamelessly and does what is right  
    and speaks truth in his heart;  
who does not slander with his tongue  
    and does no evil to his neighbour,  
    nor takes up a reproach against his friend;  
in whose eyes a vile person is despised,  
    but who honours those who fear the Lord;  
who swears to his own hurt and does not change;  
who does not put out his money at interest  
    and does not take a bribe against the innocent.  
He who does these things shall never be moved.

**Opening Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You that by grace through faith we have the privilege of entering into Your  presence. You call us to walk with You in integrity, truthfulness, humility, and grace, but time and again we fail. Help us to walk in Your strength so that we may produce good works in our lives that are to Your praise and glory. May our actions and attitudes reflect the godly characteristics that are pleasing in Your sight. Help us now to listen carefully to Your Word, we pray, and empower us to respond with faith, love and obedience. This we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

**Hymn                                     My Jesus I love Thee**by ***William Featherstone***

<https://youtu.be/vHXXnuG2-t0?si=p8BGy2HrG-WFpNfe>

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; for Thee all the follies of sin I resign.

My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou: if ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me and purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree.

I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow: if ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

I’ll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death, and praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath.

And say, when the death dew lies cold on my brow, “If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”

In mansions of glory and endless delight, I’ll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright.

I’ll sing with the glittering crown on my brow, “If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”

**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 4:25-32**

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Reflection**

Last week we thought about the way in which Christians are to put off the old sinful self and put on the new, transformed self. In our Bible reading today, Paul goes on to show us what this looks like in practice. In verse 25 we are told to speak about the truth with fellow believers. First and foremost, it is the truth of the Gospel and the truth of the Word of God about which Paul is writing. We can encourage one another and build one another up in our faith by speaking about the truth of Christ. By speaking truth to one another, we are sharpening each other in our knowledge of the truth and our love for Christ.

Whilst we are thinking about our speech let’s skip forwards to verse 29 of our reading. Paul writes there, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” What is ‘corrupting talk’ here, and how should we take care not to speak such words? This includes words that may cause others to sin in one way or another, as well as course or vulgar language or telling inappropriate ‘jokes’. Perhaps it is any speech that does not build us or our Christian brothers and sisters up in our faith? If we will listen to the Holy Spirit, He will convict us of such ‘corrupting talk’ and empower us to repent.

Paul also writes about words that ‘give grace to those who hear’. This may be a reference to the grace of God as demonstrated most perfectly and powerfully in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. In other words, our talk should be such that it points people to Jesus and the grace that is found through faith in Him. It could also be more general than this, simply meaning that our words should show grace towards others, allowing and encouraging them to grow up in Christ through gentle challenge and correction where necessary. What is very clear is that the Holy Spirit is involved in transforming our lives and behaviours. In verse 30 Paul instructs Christians not to ‘grieve the Holy Spirit’. He is sensitive to our sin and will be grieved by such actions.

Going back a few verses, Paul also draws our attention to other changes in the behaviour of the Christian. In verse 26 he writes about anger, which is of course one of the strongest human emotions. Note how Paul writes about anger – “Be angry and do not sin”! One implication of this is that it possible to be angry and not sin. If we look to Scripture, we can certainly see that God in angry at sin and rebellion by His people. We also have the example of the Lord Jesus when he was at the temple in Jerusalem and turned over the tables, released the animals and drove out the money changers. Jesus got angry, but He did not sin (Matthew 21:12-13).

The Apostle Peter warns us about the devil in the first of his letters, where he writes, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith…” (1 Peter 5:8-9) This agrees with what Paul writes about not giving the devil any opportunity to take Christians off track through their anger. However, it also shows us that we are able to resist him with the help of God’s Word and God’s Spirit. We are to be watchful and focused on Jesus.

Verse 28 deals with stealing and shows us the importance of work for the Christian. Where possible, we should work so that we can help others who are going through difficulties. We are not to amass wealth for ourselves, but rather earn enough to provide for others as well as ourselves. God provides us with what we need, and the means by which to earn that through our work. This points us towards an attitude of generosity towards others, or grace filled actions, perhaps reflecting the grace filled words about which Paul has also written. We are not to hold on to bitterness against others, but rather forgive them, just as God in Christ has forgiven us. Instead, we are to be “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another” (v.32). Amen!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word, and particularly today for Paul's simple, but important teaching on anger issues. We pray that we may be ready and willing to express anger against sin and the things that grieve Your heart, in a godly and righteous way that honours You. May we also recognise any emotions which might stir us up to unrighteous anger. May You help us never to give the enemy a foothold in our lives. We pray too, Lord, for this world where unrighteous anger seems to be all too common. Change the hearts of those who seek to answer wrong with anger and violence, and help them to seek ways of peace instead. Hear this prayer, O Lord, for it is in Jesus’ Name that we ask it, amen.

**Benediction**

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the  sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand, amen.

Attachments area

[Preview YouTube video My Jesus I Love Thee (Hymn 380) - Phil Webb and Grace Community Church Congregation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHXXnuG2-t0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

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**[My Jesus I Love Thee (Hymn 380) - Phil Webb and Grace Community Church Congregation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHXXnuG2-t0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**