**Home Service Sheet 30th July 2023**

**Call To Worship                 Psalm 71:4-6**

Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
    from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
For you, O Lord, are my hope,
    my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
Upon you I have leaned from before my birth;
    you are he who took me from my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.

**Opening Prayer**

To You, O Lord, belongs the praise and glory. In You alone do we find hope for the future and the fullness of life. You take care of us from before we were born right into eternal life with You, and we thank You for that. When we are tempted to stray from Your ways keep us close to You, and help us to remain faithful. In this time of worship now help us to listen closely to Your Word, and enable us to apply it in our lives through the work of Your Holy Spirit who dwells within us. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.

**Hymn                                     In Christ alone**by ***Stuart Townend & Keith Getty***

<https://youtu.be/mnLl663WWnc>

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory sin’s curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine – bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me;
From life’s first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I’ll stand.

**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                     Genesis 6:1-8**

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not abide inman forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.

**Reflection**

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, has a very wide variety of stories to tell us, from creation to the establishing of a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from whom would come the twelve tribes of Israel. What we read about in this book is history that did happen, but it also reveals to us important truths about God and His dealings with people. This week and next week we are going to look at two of the stranger episodes that are recorded for us in the early part of Genesis. Today we begin with Nephilim and wicked men, whose actions brought about God’s judgment.

Genesis 6 tells us that the ‘sons of God’ and ‘daughters of men’ came together and had offspring known as ‘mighty men’. There were also Nephilim on the Earth at this time. Bible scholars have used much ink speculating about what this all means, and yet we can still not be certain. One of the most common understandings is that the ‘sons of God’ should be understood to be angels, and the ‘daughters of men’ to be human women. Any offspring of such a relationship would clearly be part human and part angelic, and may well be a bit different from you and I in certain ways – some even suggesting they may have been giants. Another view is that these are godly men, of the line of Seth, and not so godly women, of the line of Lamech who married.

What is clear is that what was going on in the world at this time was not good. Verse 5 tells us that God saw the great wickedness of human beings throughout the earth, and in verse 6 we are even told that He regretted the fact that He had made them. Clearly God’s intention in creation was that men and women should be good, and do what was right, but this is not what happened. Rather, Adam disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Through this act humanity ‘fell’ and sin entered the human race. Through one man came the biggest problem the world has ever faced, sin, and ultimately only one Man could ever solve it – Jesus! (See Romans 5:12-21)

Interestingly the word, or name, Nephilim comes from the Hebrew word that means ‘to fall’, so literally the Nephilim are ‘fallen ones’. Regardless of whether they were human/angelic hybrids, giants or something else they were sinners who disobeyed God and were separated from Him. All of this shows us the disastrous state of humanity at this time. However, God, in His grace and mercy put into place a plan to save people and reconcile them back to Himself. Why did God do this? Verse 8 tells us that Noah found favour with God. Noah is a type and shadow of Christ in the Old Testament, and ultimately our hope needs to be in Him alone.

If we look at Noah and the good things that he did we see a pale reflection of what Christ did for us through His obedience to the Father. Verse 7 of our reading records the thoughts of God, showing us that He intended to destroy the whole of creation because of its wickedness and sin. This should give us a very good indication of just how serious a matter sin is with God. He hates it and desires to judge and punish those who sin, yet He is also loving and merciful too. God looked at Noah and decided not to destroy the whole world, and in a similar way God looks to His Son, Jesus and saves us from our sin if we have faith in Him. Amen!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You that despite the wickedness and evil intentions in the mind of fallen humanity, Your plan from before the foundation of the earth was to redeem Your creatures, and You chose to forgive the sins of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You that all who believe on Him are declared righteous by Your grace. You are a good and gracious God Who forgives our sin, declares us righteous, and remembers our sin no more. Help us to walk in Your ways and to point others to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Help us to look to You rather than the solutions upon which this world relies. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.

**Benediction**

Heavenly Father, thank You that You are good and gracious. Thank You also for the example of Noah and other men and women of faith who trusted Your Word and discovered that You are a God who loves us and saves us. Thank You that Jesus came to earth to die on the cross for our sin - and that by believing on Him we have the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting - thank You in Jesus’ Name, amen.