Home Service Sheet for 5th February 2023

Call To Worship Psalm 112:1-2

Praise the Lord!

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments!

His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Prayer

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, to You alone belongs all the praise and glory! You created the heavens and the Earth, and everything in them. At the beginning You said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light. By Your Word everything came into being and nothing was impossible for You. Through the Scriptures You have revealed Yourself to us, and through the law You have shown us how we are to live. Yet, O Lord, we cannot live perfectly by Your holy ways. Thank You for sending Your Son, the Lord Jesus, into this world to die for us at Calvary, that through faith in Him we might be forgiven our sin and adopted into Your family. Help us today to hear Your Word, understand it and apply it in our lives that we might evermore live to Your praise and glory. In Jesus’ Name we ask this, amen.

Hymn To God be the glory by Fanny Crosby

https://youtu.be/xil1eXE-OKo

To God be the glory, great things He hath done!

So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,

Who yielded His life an atonement for sin

And opened the Life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,

And give Him the glory, great things He hath done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!

To every believer the promise of God;

The vilest offender who truly believes,

That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,

And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;

But purer and higher and greater will be

Our wonder, our victory, when Jesus we see.

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.

1st Bible Reading Isaiah 64:1-7

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,

 that the mountains might quake at your presence—

as when fire kindles brushwood

 and the fire causes water to boil—

to make your name known to your adversaries,

 and that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome things that we did not look for,

 you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

From of old no one has heard

 or perceived by the ear,

no eye has seen a God besides you,

 who acts for those who wait for him.

You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,

 those who remember you in your ways.

Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;

 in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

We have all become like one who is unclean,

 and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf,

 and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

There is no one who calls upon your name,

 who rouses himself to take hold of you;

for you have hidden your face from us,

 and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

2nd Bible Reading 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,

what God has prepared for those who love him”

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Reflection

There is no other God like the One who has revealed Himself to us through His only Son, Jesus Christ, and in His Word, the Bible. In fact, we can rightly say that there is only One God – all other beings are created beings who had a beginning and will have an end. In the Old Testament we find people worshiping all kinds of other so-called ‘gods’, but they are never rescued by them, or spoken to by them. These ‘gods’ are rightly ridiculed (1 Kings 18:27), and on occasion the One True God humorously pokes fun by making idols fall down before the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel 5). In the New Testament the Greek ‘gods’ are powerless to do anything to stop the spread of the Gospel because they simply do not exist.

In effect, this is what our first Bible reading from the book of the prophet, Isaiah, is telling us. No-one can truly be compared to God because He alone is truly almighty, able to do great and wonderful things that deny logical explanation. Yet, the One True God is holy and without fault, but we are sinners. There is a problem that we cannot solve. We are completely reliant upon the grace and mercy of Almighty God. It is only His actions that can save us from our sin.

Paul, in the second chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, expands on the wisdom that God reveals to us in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. This wisdom is not shown through clever arguments and fancy words, but rather it is seen “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (v.4). Firstly this points us to the work and focus of the Holy Spirit. It is He who points us to Jesus and what He did for us at Calvary. It is the Spirit of God who reveals God’s wisdom to us in the Gospel and gives to us the gift of faith. Without the work of the Holy Spirit it is impossible for people to have faith in Jesus Christ, and receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

In fact, it is the very work of the Holy Spirit that shows us what is truly wise, helping us to recognise it and do something about it. This was seen in the preaching of Paul and all others who faithfully preach the true Gospel message. Some would argue that the demonstration of the Spirit and power is referring to miraculous signs, but I would suggest that this is rather referring to the power of the Holy Spirit to transfer sinners from death to eternal life through the gift of faith. This is the greatest gift that we can possibly receive from God’s Spirit as eternal life lasts forever, whereas healings only last for a human lifespan and other miracles for even less time.

Paul points us towards the contrasting actions of those who do not receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit for wisdom and faith. He writes, “None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” (v.8) God’s wisdom comes from the Spirit and leads us into eternal life and wise living. Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah and shows us again that without God revealing His wisdom to us we are lost – blind, purposeless and hopeless.

Paul also tells us that the Holy Spirit makes known to us the things of God, which allow us to live wisely in this present evil age. Not only that, but we can help others by teaching them the wondrous truths God has revealed to us in His Word and explained to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Notice that the Spirit does not point us to Himself, but rather to the mind of Christ (v.16). This is not found in strange utterances or new revelations, but rather in the sure and all-sufficient Word of God that we call the Bible. The Spirit helps us to understand it and apply it in our lives, and that truly is a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power to the glory of God! Amen!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for our salvation and our redemption and for the fact that we are fully reconciled to You through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You that Jesus atoned for our sins taking our sinfulness upon Himself so that we may enter into His wonderful resurrected eternal life. Help us, O Lord, to share the good news of the Gospel clearly and simply with those we meet and speak with. Help us to live out our lives so that they point towards the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit transforming us and making us more like Jesus. This we pray to Your glory, amen.

Benediction

Gracious God, fill us with wisdom and understanding to live as Your people today and every day. May the Holy Spirit help us to understand, apply and teach Your Word to others that through us Your Gospel may be proclaimed and Your Name would be glorified. Amen.