

22ND MARCH 2020

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

As we gathered for worship last Sunday 15 March, we could never have imagined that it would be the last time we would be together for what seems will be many weeks or even months?! I said last Sunday that even if no one else comes to church that I would still be preaching. I never thought that this would be the case and yet it is. Below you will find a shorter order of service with a shorter sermon, Psalms/hymns & prayers. May God be glorified this day as we seek to worship in spirit and in truth.

PSALM 27

The Lord's my light and saving health,
who shall make me dismayed?
My life's strength is the Lord, of whom
then shall I be afraid?
One thing I of the Lord desired,
and will seek to obtain,
That all days of my life I may
within God's house remain;
That I the beauty of the Lord
behold may and admire,
And that I in his holy place
may rev'rently enquire.
Wait on the Lord, and be thou strong,
and he shall strength afford
Unto thine heart; yea, do thou wait,
I say, upon the Lord.

READING NUMBERS 6:22-27

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON

These words were first given in the context of a book written at the end of Israel's wilderness wanderings - and as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. It is a book that looks backward and forward, reminding God's covenant people of their past blessings, as well as encouraging them concerning God's future promises.

We've all heard this benediction before - many of us have sung this benediction at baptism service because it's a benediction that reminds us that the Lord desires to bless His people. It's a blessing that conveys the intensity of the benediction to show the mercy that comes from the Name of the Lord who is the Redeemer of His people.

It's a benediction that calls us to fix their eyes upon the glory, the majesty, the power, the kindness, the mercy, and the love of God; in other words, it's a call to look upon the Lord whoever you are!

Now, this benediction just uses 15 Hebrew words and three of these words are actually the Lord's Name - Yahweh.

So, the Lord's Name begins each phrase of the benediction because it's the Lord's blessing to be conveyed to the Lord's people.

So, 15 Hebrew words are used here - and if we take the 3 times that the Lord's Name is mentioned from the benediction, how many Hebrew words are left?! 12! That is extremely significant because we know that there were 12 tribes in Israel.

And so, as Aaron would pronounce the Lord's blessing over the people in Israel - no one was left wondering, 'am I included in this blessing?' 'Is this blessing for me?!' 'Is this blessing just for half the tribes of Israel or just 10 tribes?' No, this benediction makes very clear that it is the Lord's desire to bless all and for none to be missed out. Because this was a Gospel call or a Gospel Benediction even here in Numbers 6 telling us that whoever puts their trust in the Name of the Lord will experience the benediction of the Lord's Grace in their lives!!

But this benediction could only take place once Aaron the High priest or the mediator between Israel & God had made the sacrifice on the day of Atonement – He would confess the sins of all the people and when the sacrifice was accepted by the Lord then Aaron would stand before the people – lift up His hands and pronounce over them the benediction of Peace!

But we know that this benediction was always pointing forward to the greater fulfilment of the One who alone would be the last and final sacrifice for the sins of the world. This benediction was fulfilled in Christ and by Christ.

He is our mediator between God & man; He is the last and final Sacrifice – only by His shed blood can we be saved from our sins and receive the blessing of the Lord's peace!

When Aaron made sacrifice on behalf of the people with the blood of bulls and goats – he would be out of sight for a time while the sacrifice took place. Wasn't it the same with Jesus – Jesus made the Sacrifice on the cross for our sins (but not with the blood of bulls and goats) but by His own Precious blood – and there was a time (like Aaron) when Jesus was out of sight to. We remember when Christ was taken down from the cross that He was laid in the tomb for 3 days – before conquering the grave and then standing before His people on resurrection evening to pronounce... what?

PEACE! Peace be with you! The fulfilment of the Aaronic Benediction is found in the finished work of Christ through His death and resurrection!

So, the nature of the Aaronic blessing is fulfilled in Jesus! Isn't that what we read in Romans 5:19, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aaron, carried the names of the people of Israel before God in this atoning work and once the names of the people were carried before God and the sacrifice was accepted – Aaron would then go back to the people so that they would receive the Name of the Lord and bear that Name forever!

It was by faith that they reached out to the promise contained in this benediction; it is by faith that we today reach out to Christ so that we would bear His Name forever and walk all the days of our lives in the blessing of God.

****When did you last think about your baptism? Because at your baptism God placed His Name on you! We were baptised into His Name! The minister says, "I baptise you in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."**

There it is again – this threefold Name – three times in the Aaronic Benediction the phrases start with the Lord's Name – And now with Christ's fulfilment of this benediction the church was called to go into all the world and preach the Gospel baptising in the threefold Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

I don't remember my Baptism – but I know this – the Lord put His Name on me that day! But, for 21 years of my life I suppose I trampled that Precious Name under my feet – it meant nothing to me!

But that all changed the moment Christ took hold of me and by faith I took hold of the promise of this benediction which is fulfilled in Christ! Today, His Name shapes my life – I wake up every day with His peace, with His joy – knowing that my Saviour lifts up His hands over me and says:

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace, this day and forevermore, Amen!

Baptism doesn't change the heart or save us from sin – only repentance and faith in Christ does that. But Baptism is the New Testament Aaronic Benediction that puts the Lord's Name on a person as it did in (Numbers 6v27) that calls us by faith to lay hold of the blessings of this benediction!!

May we all know in these changing times the unchanging God of the Bible who will bless and keep us and give us peace this day and forevermore, Amen!

HYMN

THE SAVIOUR DIED BUT ROSE AGAIN

The Saviour died but rose again
triumphant from the grave;
and pleads our cause at God's right hand,
omnipotent to save.

Who then can e'er divide us more
from Jesus and his love,
or break the sacred chain that binds
the earth to heaven above?

Let troubles rise, and terrors frown,
and days of darkness fall;
through him all dangers we'll defy,
and more than conquer all.

Nor death nor life, nor earth nor hell,
nor time's destroying sway,
can e'er efface us from his heart,
or make his love decay.

Each future period that will bless,
as it has blessed the past;
he loved us from the first of time,
he loves us to the last.

MOTHERS' DAY

Mother's Day might be wonderful, challenging, difficult, and lovely – Whether you are a mum through adoption, birth, or as a carer, or you're a guardian, grandmother, godmother or mother-figure to many – in the now, not yet, or the way back-when, in your daily reality or in your deepest longing, whether you had a great mum or not, or it's so much more complicated than all that, we are thinking of you all on Mother's Day!

As you navigate the journey to being the mother in whatever form it takes, as you weep in the bathroom while tiny hands knock at the door – or as you weep longing for tiny hands to appear, as you worry over high temperatures or as you say goodbye on the first day of school or you have to say goodbye when they leave home or you have to say goodbye to another precious foster-child moving on to their forever family – as your heart aches, bursts, hurts, soars, hopes, be assured we are thinking of you and praying for you on Mother's Day – and we just wanted to say

thank you for all that you do that is seen or unseen – So however mother's Day makes you feel, may you know peace, love, comfort and Hope from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Great and Awesome God, we pray for Your blessing to rest and abide with us all this day.

We give thanks for Your Peace that passes all understanding and for the gift of faith to know You and the wonder of Your Grace.

We pray for all today anxious in heart or mind. In our changing world we are thankful to know as the hymn puts it, 'O Thou who changest not abide with me.'

Be near to all who serve our communities at this time. We particularly remember all who work for the NHS and the emergency services.

We pray for all who have known tremendous change in such a short space of time. Be near to school staff and also primary and secondary children. Be near to teenagers upset by not being able to sit exams and who are anxious for their future. Be near to University lecturers and students as they try to find ways to work past all these difficulties.

Strengthen and encourage all who are residents in care homes and who work and serve at care homes.

Uphold and comfort all who are worried for loved one's and who are grieving the loss of loved one's.

We give thanks that while we may not be able to gather together in church today that we can still know your blessing and peace even if we are on our own. As you were with the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, we pray that as we turn to Your Word and seek You in prayer that we to might behold the wonder of the Lamb of God seated at the right Hand of God the Father.

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.