

21ST FEBRUARY 2021

# FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



[www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk)

*Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer. (John Bunyan)*

# HYMN

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.

# PRAYER

*Gracious Lord, Your Name is love, in love receive our prayer. Look to the cross of Your beloved Son and view the preciousness of His atoning blood; Listen to His never-failing intercession, and speak to our hearts, 'your sins are forgiven, be of good cheer.' Give to us more and more to prize the privilege of prayer, to find pardon in Christ, to converse with You; to know You in prayer as the path in which our feet tread, the latch upon the door of our lips, the marrow of our understanding, the strength of our will, the power of our affection and the sweetness of our memory. May the matter of our prayer be always wise, humble, scriptural, Christ-like. Give Your people unwavering faith that our prayers are never in vain. You have given us the greatest gift, the person of Your Son, and in Him You will give us all we need.*  
(Prayer from 'A collection of puritan prayers')



# SCRIPTURE READING

## 1 THESSALONIANS 1: 1 - 6

### (NKJV)

1 To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.


6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

# 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  
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

Before commending the proofs of their salvation, Paul informs his readers of his fervent prayers on their behalf: "We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers" (1 Thess. 1:2). This statement is one of many references in his letters that present Paul's commitment to prayer. The first thing we learn about Paul after his conversion is the statement made to Ananias that, as the King James Version eloquently puts it, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9:11). That is not a bad beginning to anyone's spiritual biography. Paul is marked as a man of prayer.



One of the keys to Paul's prayer is the word "constantly" (1 Thess. 1:2). Paul seems to have maintained a constant prayer for his persecuted friends in Thessalonica. In his former days as a Pharisee, Paul would have kept the practice of formal prayers at least three times a day: in the morning, at mid-day, and in the evening. It is hard to imagine that as an apostle he would have prayed less than this. We, too, benefit from regular times for prayer in our daily schedule. Like Paul, we pray for a wide range of family, friends, the church near and far.

The fervour of Paul's prayer life arose from his awareness of God the Father. Paul realised that the blessings he sought in the Thessalonian church come only from God. This is why Paul sought not the favour of men but of God, and therefore why he prayed constantly. To the extent that we realise that the spiritual blessings that we desire cannot be given by man but are freely given by the God of grace, and we like Paul will devote ourselves more constantly and earnestly to prayer. Our prayers, like Paul's, should be richly covered with thanks, realising that, as James put it, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father"*. A constant attitude of thankfulness marks out those who have been made aware of God's wonderful mercies. As Paul writes toward the end of this letter: *"pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"* (1 Thess. 5:17-18).

Paul's opening prayer identifies the marks of grace that bear testimony to the believers' salvation. He writes to express his joy over the report that Timothy brought back from Thessalonica, noting their "work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope" (1 Thess. 1:3).

The first evidence of salvation is faith as it is observed through good works: "your work of faith" (1 Thess. 1:3). Having been justified through faith the Christian is called to the "work of faith." Paul makes this connection explicit in Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Paul speaks of "work" in the singular rather than "works" in the plural. This suggests that faith produces work as an undivided whole, a continuous career of activity. This is a life of increasing fruitfulness in obedience to God's instruction and commands in the Bible. Leon Morris notes that sincere faith in Christ "cannot but transform the whole of life, and issue in 'work' of many kinds." This is what the writer of Hebrews celebrated when he remembered Bible heroes "who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight" (Heb. 11:34).

**Second, Paul rejoices in the Thessalonians' "labour of love."** This labour of love emphasises sacrificial actions that go beyond ordinary works. Whereas "work" focuses on the deeds, "labour" considers the arduous effort required. Paul rejoices that the Thessalonians were willing to serve in costly ways because of the love that had risen from their faith in Christ. Paul envisions love labouring among fellowship Christians (1 Thess. 3:12), in concern for Christians in other places (1 Thess. 4:9), and "for all" (1 Thess. 3:12), which includes non-Christians. This kind of "labour of love" was discovered by a visitor to a Bulgarian peasant's house. During the long stay the peasant's daughter busily stitched at a dress the whole time. He asked her, "Don't you ever get tired of that eternal sewing?" "Oh no!" she said, "you see this is my wedding dress." It was for her a labour of love, and the weariness and difficulty seemed as nothing to her heart. So is the labour of love that Christians offer to one another and to the world.

The fullness of God's love became known to believers only through the sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for our sins. John wrote, "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10). That gracious love of God works in the hearts of those who receive it, so that we begin to see others as God sees them and to love them without thought of gain or of cost to ourselves. Hearing of the "labour of love" among the Thessalonians, Paul rejoices at this evidence of God's saving power at work within them.



Third, Paul notes their “steadfastness of hope” (1 Thess. 1:3). The hope of which he refers is not mere wishful thinking, as when we say, “I hope it snows on Christmas morning!” Rather, biblical hope is the certainty of receiving what God has promised, including forgiveness and an inheritance in eternal glory. Like love, hope springs from a living faith in Christ and His Word. Paul wrote to Titus: *“he saved us... so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (Tit. 3:5-7). The result of this hope is the ability to remain steadfast in the face of present trials, knowing that by persevering in faith we will be saved.

The steadfastness of Christian hope is not a grim, stoic resignation to hardship but a believing strength that faces trials in the certain hope of victory through Jesus Christ. Alexander the Great showed this attitude when he divided up all his property before setting off to war. A friend exclaimed, “But you are keeping nothing for yourself.” “O yes, I am,” Alexander answered. “I have kept my hopes.” Christians have a far greater hope than even the fondest desires of a conqueror like Alexander: **we have, Paul wrote, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).**

## HYMN

One day when heaven was filled with His praises,  
One day when sin was as black as could be,  
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin—  
Dwelt among men, my example is He!

*Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;  
Buried, He carried my sins far away;  
Rising, He justified freely forever:  
One day He's coming—O glorious day!*

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain,  
One day they nailed Him to die on the tree;  
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected;  
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He. *(Refrain)*

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,  
One day the stone rolled away from the door;  
Then He arose, over death He had conquered;  
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore. *(Refrain)*

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,  
One day the skies with His glory will shine;  
Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing;  
Glorious Saviour, this Jesus is mine! *(Refrain)*

## PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, we come before you and give thanks for your Precious Son Jesus Christ. We thank you for the cross on which the Saviour died, and in response may our richest gain be counted loss and pour contempt on all our pride. Give us strength, grace, hope, patience and encouragement we pray in Jesus name, Amen.*

## 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.**

## WORSHIP

As we are now in another lockdown it means that we are no longer able to meet in the church building. As well as the video recording and the Worship at Home material which will continue to be made available through the church website and Facebook page, we will start a Zoom-service on Sunday mornings. The Zoom-service will begin at 11am for about 30-40 minutes. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk [SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk) Please continue to take care and stay safe.

## GUILD

The next meeting of the Guild by Zoom will take place on Monday 22nd February at 3.30pm. At this meeting Pam Cairns will give a presentation on Seema's Project, the project Ferintosh Branch is supporting this session. Anyone interested is warmly invited to join the meeting. Contact Elizabeth Blackburn for an invitation with the joining information.

The Guild would like to thank all those who participated in the virtual soup lunch and donated towards the projects. If anyone still has cash or a cheque for Seema's Project, please deliver it to Janet Winchester by 28th February, or phone 865308 to arrange for it to be collected. A final total will be announced in a future Worship at Home.

## LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The Ladies Bible Study meet on Wednesdays at 9.45am on Zoom. We are looking at five studies called Living Christianity: following Jesus in every area of life. If you'd like to join us please contact [jintys@btinternet.com](mailto:jintys@btinternet.com) so an invitation can be sent to you.

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The World Day of Prayer this year is Friday 5th March. As things stand, services in person will not be possible, but on-line services at national and local level are being organised. More details will be available next week.

Prior to 5th March the Scottish Committee is organising 10 days of prayer on-line, featuring reflection from leaders of the Churches involved in a Scotland, and information about the host country, Vanuatu. Details can be found on [www.wdpScotland.org.uk](http://www.wdpScotland.org.uk)

## THE LEPROSY MISSION

If anyone would like a copy of the Leprosy Mission 2021 Prayer Diary, or a home collection box, please contact Janet Winchester on 01349 865308. Like most charities, the Leprosy Mission has suffered a drop in income, and an increase in costs due to the global pandemic, so if you can help, please consider a donation. Donations can be made direct on the Leprosy Mission Scotland website or I will be gathering together what people have collected over the year towards the end of March.