

7TH FEBRUARY 2021

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition. (Jeremiah Burroughs)

HYMN

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart;
I will enter His courts with praise.
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made.
I will rejoice for He has made me glad.
He has made me glad, He has made me glad,
I will rejoice for He has made me glad.
He has made me glad, He has made me glad,
I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, thank you that you have made the Lord Jesus such a great Saviour for us and such a gracious friend. We want to respond to Him with all our hearts and to say we do want this man who is the God man to reign over us. We pray this in His name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING ISAIAH 55: 1 - 13 (NKJV)

1 Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.
4 Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.
5 Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.
6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;
7 let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.


10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
12 For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

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

We can see what is pictured here as we notice the end of the chapter, Isaiah begins to talk about trees and fields and clapping hands and the thorn becoming a cypress and the brier becoming a myrtle and so on, and he's envisaging a kingdom that's going to grow and spread and be magnificent like a restored Eden. Later in the prophecy, he'll talk about it in terms of new heavens and a new earth. He's talking about what Jesus is going to accomplish and he's saying here, "Let me tell you about this covenant life that it is absolutely beautiful. It's something extraordinary. It is something fulfilling. It is something satisfying. It's something that integrates you, that makes you whole, that helps you see the purpose of life, why you are here, why God made you."



To those who are spending their money on bread that does not satisfy, the prophet holds out the prospect of a life that is full and overflowing with the richest of food. It's a banquet that he is describing, a feast that he is describing.

Then in the second place, you see here not just a covenant life that is offered and described but an invitation that is given. Look at the verbs: come, buy, listen, incline your ear and hear that your soul, verse 3, may live. Are you spiritually alive? I mean alive in your heart, in your soul? Alive unto God? Alive unto what it means to have sins forgiven? Alive to the fact that you're a child of God? Alive to the fact that you're in covenant with God and surrounded by the promises of God?

Jesus spoke about this, didn't He, in John 6. He talked about those who labour for the bread that does not satisfy, for the bread that perishes, and He said to them, "I am the bread of life and if you eat of this bread, you will never go hungry ever again." Well, that's what Isaiah is talking about right here. He's talking about a banquet. He's talking about a covenant life. He's talking about fullness of life that is to be found. He's talking about a life that somehow or other is associated with King David. And King David, of course, is just a type and a shadow of David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus, who is described in Romans 1:3 as descended according to the flesh from David.

Come as you are. You notice this wine and this milk and this food are to those who have no money and it is offered without money and without price. You cannot buy this covenant life. It is for those who are destitute. It is for those who are without. How can that possibly be? Because the covenant mediator, the Lord Jesus, who is the suffering servant that Isaiah has talked about in chapter 53, has paid the price. Remember the words from that great hymn... "Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow."

Come as you are. Yes, but look at verses 6 and 7. Come as you are but you cannot stay as you are. Come as you are with empty hands. The words of another hymn... "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." But when you come to Him, you have to change because He will change you.

"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Yes, when you come to this One, you come in faith and repentance equally, forsaking your sin and laying hold of the Lord Jesus, laying hold of the covenant mediator. That's what FAITH means. **"Forsaking - All - I - Trust - Him ."**

While He is near. You say, "Isn't God always near? Isn't He everywhere? Isn't there a Psalm somewhere that says that "if I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, behold you are there?" Yes, God is everywhere but He isn't always everywhere with this promise because sometimes we don't have ears to hear it. Sometimes we don't want to see it. Sometimes we are so engrossed in the things of this world that we cannot hear His voice or see Him when He draws near and He's saying, "When I am near."

Maybe you need to hear this message today and things certainly haven't worked out for you as you had hoped or planned. You have spent your money on bread which doesn't satisfy, on work and labour that doesn't satisfy. You look for advice but it doesn't help. You find yourself exactly where the prophet imagines: hungry, thirsty, looking for meaning and purpose. And he's saying to you this morning, if you can hear that, listen to him in his word. You don't need extra revelations of God. You don't need to see visions. Just listen to him in his word and he's saying to you, "Come. Come. Incline your ear. Hear. Listen. Eat and drink." It's an invitation. It's an invitation to a banquet where you don't have to pay. There is an open table and the feast is spread and all you have to do is turn up. That's all. Just come while He is near. There may come a day when you won't hear that anymore. Your heart will grow hardened, clouds will descend and you won't be able to hear His voice. You won't be able to discern His word of Gospel reassurance that He's offering here. So, while He is near, listen to His invitation.

There is a life that is offered here and there is an invitation that is given here and there is a promise here too that is appended. You notice he says in verse 9, "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways." You say, "How can I possibly come to God?"

How can God awaken dead souls to life whose wills are in bondage to their natures that seeks to please themselves rather than please God? How can this possibly be?" And the answer is by the power of Almighty God.

This promise of the word of God, actually he says three things about it, that this word of God, first of all, is superior. Listen to this: "My thoughts are not your thoughts. My ways are not your ways." Now, that has a wide application but here in this particular passage, I think the prophet is saying this: that salvation and restoration and the offer of mercy in the covenant mercies of God is possible because God is far greater than us and He has devised a plan, a plan of redemption from before the foundation of the world to send His Son, to send this suffering servant, king, conqueror figure that Isaiah could see in the distance and that we know to be the Lord Jesus. And this word is powerful. He uses the image of rainwater that comes down and it waters a seed that otherwise would be dead and as the moisture enters into that seed, that seed comes to life and it begins to grow, and it begins to burst forth with fruit so that the one who sows is also the one who reaps and eats bread. And this word is effective. "It won't return to me void," He says. "It shall not return to me empty. It shall accomplish that for which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

The hymn-writer said, "I heard the voice of Jesus say, *Come unto me and rest; Lay down, thou weary one, lay down, Thy head upon my breast.*" *I came to Jesus as I was, Weary and worn and sad; I found in him a resting-place, And he has made me glad. "I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold, I freely give The living water, thirsty one, Stoop down and drink and live.' I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream; My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, And now I live in him."*

Those are the words of Horatius Bonar. It's what this text is about. Across the centuries from 2,700 years ago, it comes to you this morning: to you who may have been close to despair, given up on life, no longer chasing dreams because you don't believe the dream is true. God comes to you in His word, His Gospel word, "Come, buy without money and without price and eat and drink that your soul might live."

HYMN

Majesty, worship his majesty
Unto Jesus be all glory, power and praise
Majesty, kingdom authority flow from his throne
Unto his own his anthem raise
So exalt lift up on high the name of Jesus
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the king
Majesty, worship his majesty
Jesus who died now glorified
King of all kings.

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')

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 Please continue to take care and stay safe.

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 so an invitation can be sent to you.

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.

GUILD

The Guild is inviting you to a virtual soup lunch in aid of Guild Projects on Sunday 14th February. The idea is to enjoy a bowl of your favourite soup at home, and make a donation to the projects. You can either make your donation direct to the Guild office by using the donate button on the Guild section of the Church of Scotland website, or post cash or a cheque to Ferintosh Church of Scotland Guild through my letterbox (Craigdarroch, Burnside Lane, Canon Bridge), when I will keep it in quarantine until I can safely bank it.

Money donated direct will be divided between all six current projects, with the aim of evening up the totals. Money donated via our Branch will go to the project we at Ferintosh are supporting this year: Sima's Project in Puna, India, providing safe accommodation, education and training for the children of sex workers in that city, as well as a safe haven and alternative life opportunities for some of the sex workers themselves. We hope to have a presentation about this project at a our next Guild meeting by Zoom on Monday 15th February - more information next week.