

12TH SEPTEMBER 2021

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." (John Bunyan)

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.

PRAYER

Gracious God and Father, thank you for the joy of your presence with us. We praise you that you are a God of joy and of infinite grace, a Father to your children. We praise you that you have given up your own Son for us on the cross that all the privileges of your grace might be ours this day. So, make us holy through your truth, your Word is truth. And this we pray for Jesus Christ our Saviour's sake. Amen.

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.*

SCRIPTURE READING

2 CORINTHIANS 4: 1 - 12

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

8 *We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

SERMON

One of the most poignant stories in 'The Pilgrim's Progress' is when Christian and his companion Hopeful are captured and imprisoned by a giant named Despair. There is a dark dungeon deep inside Doubting Castle where the two pilgrims suffer terribly from the giant's torments. Behind these thick walls and iron gates, Christian's thoughts descend at times even to utter despair. The man who had already walked so far to the Celestial City and who had bravely fought Apollyon is now in the narrow cell of hopelessness listening to such dark whispers.

Much in John Bunyan's masterful allegory is both biblical as well as autobiographical. As he wrote about Christian's prison experience, John Bunyan himself was in prison, where he was held for some twelve years on account of his gospel ministry and where he doubtless experienced deep pain and despair. He wrote in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, "I found myself a man encompassed with infirmities; the parting with my Wife and poor Children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of the flesh from the bones."

In the pilgrims' prison story, Christian and Hopeful are captured on Wednesday and held by Giant Despair until early Sunday morning. Here Bunyan gives the reader a clue to what comes next. Sunday morning, just as day is breaking, Christian realises he has the key called Promise on a chain around his neck. In his despair and pain, he forgot all about it. The turn of this key opens every door and gate, and the pilgrims quickly make their escape from Doubting Castle and back to the King's Highway.

What promise held such power that it proved to be the key to Christian's dramatic deliverance from the clutches of Despair?

The Apostle Paul's experience helps us here. In 2 Corinthians 1:8, Paul wrote: "For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself." We don't know what terrible trial the courageous missionary had endured, but it was so severe that the man who had experienced beatings, prison, stoning, and shipwreck said that because of this affliction he "despaired of life itself."

Yet a little further on in his letter, Paul wrote, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair" (4:8). Somewhere between 2 Corinthians 1:8 and 4:8 (despairing and not despairing), Paul had discovered the key of promise. It is the promise that is rooted in the resurrection. Ultimate deliverance, despair-defeating hope, and death-defying joy are all bound up in the reality of the resurrection, Christ's and ours in Him.

In Christ, our lives are forever bound up in His unending life. Paul, who had made his own escape from Giant Despair, wrote that because of "the God who raises the dead . . . we do not lose heart" (1:9; 4:16).

HYMN

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
(Refrain)

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
(Refrain)

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.
(Refrain)

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.
(Refrain)

PRAYER

Lord, help us to know Christ better, to know that He has loved us to the end and to love and trust him more. We pray for His sake and for our good in His 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.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The Ladies Bible Study has now resumed in September. We are continuing our study of the The Creed, the creed in question being the Apostles Creed. We are just at the beginning of the studies. So, if you'd like to join us, you'd be most welcome each Wednesday in the Church Hall at 1.30pm for approximately an hour.

WORSHIP

Sunday morning worship takes place at 11am in the church. We have reduced social distancing to 1 metre within the church and as a result have been able to increase the number of seats that are available, though there is still an upper limit. We would love to be able to welcome you to the service, so to guarantee a seat, please book with the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, preferably by 5pm on the Friday prior to the service.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking or email the Session Clerk at

SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

The Sunday Zoom service is at 6.30pm. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk at SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Please continue to take care and stay safe.

HIGHLAND FOODBANK

Please continue your wonderful support of this foodbank. With Universal Credit being reduce post pandemic, the need for the most vulnerable to be helped becomes acute. Items such as Household cleaning stuff, coffee (instant and ground), UHT milk and milk alternatives (soy and oat) and long lasting juice, crackers and oatcakes and pies (eg FrayBentos) are in most need for now.

Thank you for your support in our local area.