

11th August, 2024

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's

Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
see Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
by His Son God now has spoken;
'tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
was there ever grief like His?
Friends thro' fear His cause disowning,
foes insulting His distress;
many hands were raised to wound
Him,
none would interpose to save;
but the deepest stroke that pierced
Him
was the stroke that Justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly,
nor suppose the evil great,
here may view its nature rightly,
here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed;
see who bears the awful load;
'tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of Man and Son of God.

Here we have a firm foundation,
here the refuge of the lost:
Christ the Rock of our salvation,
His the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
who on Him their hope have built.

The Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright

Read Philippians 1:3-11 and John 2:1-12. Being Made Perfect

Today we have a summary and encouragement to live.

In our Gospel reading, we read of the superabundance of all that God wants to do in our lives. Jesus' miracle of changing water into the very best wine involved 20-30 gallons of water, which equates to at very least 700 bottles of fine wine. Wine was, and still can be, a symbol of joy – God brings super abundant joy! He brings life, and life in all its abundance, see John 10:10.

Philippians is about living that life in this super abundance, and I want to highlight three themes that we've consistently returned to.

Firstly, live a life of superabundant joy. Joy is mentioned five times and rejoice eight times in this short letter. Maybe the best known reference is Philippians 4:4-5. *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!* What are, to quote Ian Dury(!), our 'reasons to be cheerful?'

These begin with the Lord Jesus Christ, who gives his all for us (see Philippians 2:6-8). God very much loves and values us. He acts to save us, winning eternal life for us (see Philippians 3:20-21). Jesus' work calls us together into family, his family, and into partnership working together to bring light to a darkened world.

We are challenged to rejoice, as a command. It can be a command because we can always find something to give thanks for – though we might need the help of others of our godly family to gently help us to find it. We can practice an 'attitude of gratitude', and seek more of the Holy Spirit to enable us to produce fruit of love, joy, and peace.

Secondly, live a superabundant life, as citizens of Heaven. Philippians 3:20-21 says. *'But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.'*

Philippi was a roman colony, those born within it could become Roman citizens, a huge privilege, and, responsibility. To be a roman colony meant certain privileges and freedoms, but to keep this status meant modelling yourself on the mother city, copying the values, principles, manners and even architecture of Rome. Similarly, to be a roman citizen was a significant honour, but required you to maintain standards, to behave as a representative of Rome.

To be citizens of the Kingdom of God, children of the Heavenly Father, is an immeasurable privilege, and it comes with responsibility. We are to represent God's Kingdom, both collectively as the church, and individually. We are to 'shine like stars' – see Philippians 2:14-16. And our church has the vision of showing God's love in everything we do – a good Kingdom of God value.

As we live in God's ways and the abundant life this brings on earth, so others will look to us and see God's love and a foretaste of the Kingdom of God and Heaven.

Thirdly, live a superabundant life in partnership/family. Philippians 1:4-6. *'In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ...'* Paul uses the word *Koinonia*, translated partnership, or fellowship, 5 times in this letter. Christianity is a team game.

I've been watching some of the Olympics and the cycling team sprint is fascinating in the way in which three cyclists start off for each team, but two of these sacrifice themselves in order to get the third person into the best position to cross the line in the fastest possible time.

As God's family and citizens of the Kingdom, we are invited to participate and we do this best together, in partnership, using our different gifts and abilities to get each other, and as many others as we can, across the line.

To do this we have to value (love) each other. Chapter 2:3-4 tells us: *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

In conclusion: Stand firm! *'Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!'* (Philippians 4v.1). In our shaky world we can be people of joy, of hope, and working together, standing firm.

And we can do this because our God is unstoppable. *'being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 1:6)

So, let us 'abound' in the superabundance of our God.

11th Sunday after Trinity: O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: August 21st at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: August 21st at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: August 28th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday, TBA
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.pariahofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>