

Poole Bay Methodist Circuit worship

Sunday 21st April 2024

“God’s indwelling love.” - Led by Dr Julian Tawn

This service can be found on my YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/rT9Uw_W-pFE

Surprise! It’s me again, Julian Tawn leading worship for Sunday 21st April 2024. Today we will be reflecting on the lectionary readings for last week and this week from 1 John 3.

So let us join together again in worshipping our wonderful risen Lord and Saviour!

Come, everyone, to Christ the cornerstone.
Come to the one who gives resources to build the kingdom.
God invites you and empowers you with the Spirit.
So come and worship Jesus, beloved Son of the Father.

Let us pray:

Let our prayers ascend like incense,
scenting the air with praise;
for you, Lord, made yourself the lamb that was slain for all,
the one who let humanity do its worst,
and you overcame it all, to the glory of God.
You are worthy of all praise and adoration.

Our first hymn this morning is a hymn of praise, number **342** in Singing the Faith, “All hail the power of Jesu’s name!” As usual for me, there is an organ accompaniment on the video and audio files, and a YouTube link on the sheet for those who can use it.

The music and words can also be found here: [YouTube Link](#)

All hail the power of Jesus' Name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown Him Lord of all.

Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
and crown Him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe,
All nations great and small,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown Him Lord of all.

O that, with yonder sacred throng,
we at His feet may fall,
Join in the everlasting song,
and crown Him Lord of all.

Opening Prayers

Let our prayers raise the roof,
filling the air with harmony,
to overpower the discord of all our bleatings,
for you are the Good Shepherd of the sheep.
You lead us in the ways of God,
through the hills and valleys of this world.
You are worthy of all adoration and praise.

We so often follow the latest trend, so often are easily led without thinking whether the trend is the right one to take. We go with the flow, not challenging or changing. We look to the powerful and influential no matter what lifestyles they live. We don’t give a second glance to the poor and the bottom of the pile. We forget compassion, humility and generosity; we forget our Christian values. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forgive us for our blindness, for our lack of thought, for all that we have done and said that has not helped but has hindered, that has not healed but has hurt. We offer our sorrow, repenting of such ways that don’t lead us and others closer to you and your kingdom.

From the burden of our failings, from the guilt of our wrongdoing,
God releases us, renews us, redeems us. Thanks be to God.

Amen.

We give thanks, O God, that on your firm foundation we can build our lives, live our lives, find purpose and meaning, stability and peace.

We give thanks that with you as our rock, our cornerstone, we can navigate the tussles and troubles of the world, not avoiding them, but making sense of them and doing all we can to make lives better.

We give thanks that our faith in you steadies us when we are surrounded by false truths, greedy ways, or power-grabbing leaders who have no thought for anyone but themselves.

For your promises and firm foundation, we give thanks.

Amen.

The 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading

1 John 3:1-11

What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it - we’re called children of God! That’s who we really are. But that’s also why the world doesn’t recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he’s up to. But friends, that’s exactly who we are: children of God. And that’s only the beginning. Who knows how we’ll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we’ll see him - and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus’ life as a model for our own. All who indulge in a sinful life are

dangerously lawless, for sin is a major disruption of God’s order. Surely you know that Christ showed up in order to get rid of sin. There is no sin in him, and sin is not part of his program. No one who lives deeply in Christ makes a practice of sin. None of those who do practice sin have taken a good look at Christ. They’ve got him all backward. So, my dear children, don’t let anyone divert you from the truth. It’s the person who acts right who is right, just as we see it lived out in our righteous Messiah. Those who make a practice of sin are straight from the Devil, the pioneer in the practice of sin. The Son of God entered the scene to abolish the Devil’s ways. People conceived and brought into life by God don’t make a practice of sin. How could they? God’s seed is deep within them, making them who they are. It’s not in the nature of the God-born to practice and parade sin. Here’s how you tell the difference between God’s children and the Devil’s children: The one who won’t practice righteous ways isn’t from God, nor is the one who won’t love brother or sister. A simple test.

For this is the original message we heard: We should love each other.

Reflection

We are children of God

Today, I am reflecting on the lectionary readings from the first letter of John, chapter 3.

This letter can be divided into three sections:

Ch 1-2 Experiencing the Light of God

Ch 3-4 Experiencing the Love of God

Ch 5 Experiencing the Life of God

So, today we are in chapter 3, ‘Experiencing the Love of God,’ and it starts with our identity as Children of God.

To be a child of God is an alien concept to people of the world. They’ve not experienced what it means, so they don’t understand how we feel, think and act. They live by a different set of values.

People don’t understand that the relationship I have with God means I don’t want to do things that would cause Him hurt. He’s my Heavenly Father, and like most children, I love my dad and only want to do what pleases him.

In families, children often take on the characteristics of their parents or grandparents. You will hear people making comments such as, “He’s the spitting image of his Dad at that age,” or “Doesn’t she look just like her mum when she does that?” Like it, or not, we often resemble our parents in one way or another, either in looks or behaviours.

Well, I want to be like my heavenly Father, and one day, when I come face to face with Him, I will see Him as He is and be transformed into His likeness! Have you ever thought about that?

John says that everyone who has this hope, that is everyone who walks in the hope of the second coming of Christ, who is expecting his imminent return, will walk in a manner that will cause the purity of God to arise.

If you’re living with the thought that Jesus could return any moment, then you’ll be more aware of how you live your life! Not to be doing it in order to earn a reward, but to be in a relationship that demonstrates who He is in you.

John is saying here that those who are living in the place of expecting Christ at any time, are living in a way that leads to righteousness. Contrast this to verses 4-10 that says those who commit sin break the law and are not part of the family of God.

We all commit sin from time to time, but what John is talking about here, is not those people who struggle with sin, but those who practice sin! - they are not reborn into God’s family!

The verb commit in the Greek language is in the ‘present perfect’ tense which means those who continue to sin, or who make sin their practice or their way of life! It’s the same tense as is used in Ephesians 5:18 “Be [continually] filled with the Spirit.”

John says, if you abide (are abiding) in Christ, you will not be committed to practicing sin. If you are born of God, you will seek to be like your Father. But if you are continuing to practice sin, then you are showing you are like Satan. You are displaying his traits and following his ways! We are known by what we practice – not our mistakes – but our habitual living!

When we are a child of God, we will behave like one and, like Jesus, do what we see our Father doing! But if we disregard God’s ways and make a practice out of doing wrong, we demonstrate that we still belong to the prince of this world!

So, we need to stay close to Christ. We need to maintain relationship through repentance when we sin. And we need to demonstrate who we are by displaying the family resemblance!

Amen

Our second hymn for today is, “Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine”, which is number **548** in Singing the Faith. You know about the organ accompaniment and YouTube link, of course!

The music and words can also be found here: [YouTube Link](#)

Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Refrain

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour, all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour, all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Refrain

Perfect submission, all is at rest
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Refrain

Reading

1 John 3:16-24

This is how we’ve come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves. If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God’s love? It disappears. And you made it disappear.

My dear children, let’s not just talk about love; let’s practice real love. This is the only way we’ll know we’re living truly, living in God’s reality. It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.

And friends, once that’s taken care of and we’re no longer accusing or condemning ourselves, we’re bold and free before God! We’re able to stretch our hands out and receive what we asked for because we’re doing what he said, doing what pleases him. Again, this is God’s command: to believe in his personally named Son, Jesus Christ. He told us to love each other, in line with the original command. As we keep his commands, we live deeply and surely in him, and he lives in us.

And this is how we experience his deep and abiding presence in us: by the Spirit he gave us?

Reflection

In the previous reflection, I spoke about experiencing the Love of God in our Identity. We are adopted into the family – sons and daughters of God.

Now, we will look at experiencing the Love of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

First however, John picks up the theme of loving one another again and particularly about loving your brother or sister. Jesus said that all people will know you are my disciples by the love you have for each other.

Loving fellow believers is a sign that you are born again, that you have passed from death to life. We love them and support their gifting. We encourage one another and recognise the place each one of us has within our fellowship.

Jesus tells us to love our brother and sister, treat everyone with honour and respect!

I love what John writes in verse 18: *Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth!*

Far too often we say things yet fail to follow through! When you tell someone something and they say, “I’ll pray for you”, do you wonder if they do, and if so, how often?

Have you said those words to someone and maybe prayed once or even a second time, if you remember!

“*In deed*” means to take action, to do something about it!

“*In truth*” is about your attitude as you take that action.

Are you all smiles as you say, *“Of course I’ll help you”*, but inside you’re thinking; *“Why did I ask if there was anything I could do?”*

There have been times when I have helped people begrudgingly and times when I have done it cheerfully. I know the times when I have felt good afterwards and when not!

God loves a cheerful giver and appreciates the open hearted!

God commands that we believe in the name of Jesus and that we love one another, and once again, we come back to the phrase “Abide in Him”. And as we do that, He shows His love by abiding in us in the form of the Holy Spirit.

As the Holy Spirit dwells in us, He opens to us the fullness of God, the fruit of love and the gifts that lead to unity in the body!

He takes our focus off other people. There is no space to become envious of anyone because the Holy Spirit is taking us into the purposes and making us into the person God has created us to be!

God made me to be me! God made you to be you! What could possibly be better than that!

Actually, when He comes and indwells in us, we become image bearers of Christ – and that is the fulfilment of all we can be!

Amen.

We come now to our prayers of intercession, that is prayers for other people. Again, I am preparing this service over a week in advance, so these are somewhat generic. Please feel free to pause the video / audio to pray your own prayers about issues of the day.

Let us pray:

Lord God who has called us to faith,
in faith we pray for the needs of others.

For the world and its people,

Lord, we pray.

Today, we pray for our King, who is ruling while receiving treatment for cancer. May he find comfort in the companionship of others, support from family and friends, and strength in his faith in God. We pray for the Princess of Wales as she deals with her own treatment for cancer. Be with her, and with Prince William and their children George, Charlotte and Louis as they support and uphold each other. We pray for all the Royal family as they adjust their lives to take on additional duties.

For the world and its people,

Lord, we pray.

For all who grieve for the loss of loved ones, family or friends, near or far away. Especially those who are bereaved a long way from family who can’t travel to be with them to offer comfort and support. In their

loss, in their grief, in their solitude may they find a calm centre and be upheld by their faith, their friendship and their neighbours.

For the world and its people,
Lord, we pray.

For those whose bodies are ravaged by pain and illness, by disfigurement and disability. For those fearful of treatment and those waiting for treatment.

For the world and its people,
Lord, we pray.

We pray for those of faith and those of no faith, for those with purpose and those with no purpose in life. For those who have a clear direction and those who flounder uncertain for life in all its complexities. For those whose mental health causes them pain, anguish, confusion and loneliness, for those who feel abandoned, unwanted, unloved and un-helped.

For the world and its people,
Lord, we pray.

For countries at war with other countries and within themselves, for their people who fear for their lives and stability, for those made homeless and jobless and offered nothing but an uncertain future, especially the Middle East (Gaza, Israel and Iran). For those countries where violence comes all too easily to the fore and where it is hard to grasp the real reason behind it. Remembering countries at war where their people are damaged, isolated, abused, for Ukraine, Russia, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Mozambique and closer to home for the people of Ireland and Northland Ireland, for Catholics and Protestants, those of faith and those of none.

For the world and its people,
Lord, we pray.

For Christians trying to work out the best way to live out their lives, true to their faith, to the Gospel, to their calling. Trying in these days to do the best they can, pulled this way and that. Trying to look beyond the present to the future, beyond their immediate neighbourhood to the world wide family, for we are all God’s children. Help us to catch a wider more inclusive vision of the needs of the world and its people for unless we are all fed no one is satisfied, unless we are all inoculated no one is safe.

For the world and its people,
Lord, we pray.

For ourselves we pray that our ears may be used to hear the cries of the needy, that our eyes be used to see the needs around us, that our voices be used to speak up for the marginalised and the poor, that our hands be used to reach out in comfort and that our lives be used to improve the lives of others.

For the world and its people,
Lord, we pray. Amen.

We come now to our final hymn, which is number **322** in Singing the Faith, “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.” There is an organ accompaniment on the video and audio files and a YouTube link for those who can use it.

The music and words can also be found here: [YouTube Link](#)

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

Jesus! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
O Prophet, Priest and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Dear Name, the Rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding Place,
My never failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace!

Blessing

God, our heavenly father,
send us out in the power of your Spirit,
to build on the cornerstone of our faith,
Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

Thank you once again for allowing me to spend this time in worship with you. I wish you God's blessing throughout the week to come. Take great care of yourselves.

Julian Tawn

15th April 2024