**Home Service Sheet for Sunday 31st July 2022**

**Call To Worship:                Psalm 107:1-9**

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
    for his steadfast love endures forever!
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
    whom he has redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
    from the east and from the west,
    from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes,
    finding no way to a city to dwell in;
hungry and thirsty,
    their soul fainted within them.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
    and he delivered them from their distress.
He led them by a straight way
    till they reached a city to dwell in.
Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
    for his wondrous works to the children of man!
For he satisfies the longing soul,
    and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

**Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, we bring our praise and thanks to You today. In our joys, and in our times of trouble, You have been there with us. When we cry out to You, You hear our prayer and surround us with Your loving presence. Wherever we go, You are there with us revealing Yourself to us through Your Word. Help us today, O Lord, to worship You as You desire and obey Your commands. Grant us the ability to understand and apply Your Word in our lives. Amen.

**Hymn                                     Jesus shall reign**by ***Isaac Watts***

[***https://youtu.be/svSHCUcItHg***](https://youtu.be/svSHCUcItHg)

Jesus shall reign where’er the sun does his successive journeys run;

His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.

For Him shall endless prayer be made, and praises throng to crown His head;

His name like sweet perfume shall rise with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue dwell on His love with sweetest song,

And infant voices shall proclaim theur early blessings on His name.

Blessings abound where’er He reigns; the prisoner leaps to lose his chains;

The weary find eternal rest; and all the sons of want are blest.

Where He displays His healing power, death and the curse are known no more;

In Him the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their father lost.

Let every creature rise and bring distinctive honours to our King;

Angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud Amen.

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 that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Reading:                    Colossians 3:1-11**

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is yourlife appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old selfwith its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

**Reflection**

There is a saying that speaks of folk who are ‘too heavenly minded to be any earthly good’. I suspect we all have an idea what this might look like in practice – someone who is aloof and not really living in the practicalities of the here and now. Certainly there is some truth in that we need to deal with day to day life and the necessities of the here and now. We do need to think about food, drink, clothing, health and relationships with other people. However, our Bible reading today makes it clear that the opposite extreme is also a problem for Christians. If we are too earthly minded, then Paul suggests that we will, in effect, be no heavenly good!

Paul tells the Colossians to set their “minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (v.2) Paul is not telling us to ignore the basics of human life. There are many things here on Earth that are morally good or neutral, and there’s nothing wrong with us paying attention to those kinds of things. We need to cook meals and dress ourselves before going out in public. The issue that Paul is addressing here is illustrated later in our reading by the list of things that the believers are to ‘put to death’. Paul initially concentrates on why we need to focus on the things of God, rather than the things of this world.

In Christ, through faith, we are made new creations, or citizens, of God’s new Kingdom. The old ‘me’ has died and the new ‘me’ has been made alive in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. At first it seems like something really hard to understand, but I think Paul illustrates it so well that it becomes obvious what he is meaning. Paul is talking about the transformation that happens in us when we place our faith in Jesus Christ. Often it’s a process, and it takes time and effort, but little by little we are transformed from being self-centred human beings who delight in sin into new creations who look increasingly more like Jesus in our words and actions.

So what are the kinds of actions, thoughts and attitudes that need to be put to death? Paul writes of “sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” This is far from an exhaustive list of such sins, but it serves as a good example of the kinds of things Paul is talking about. In his other letters there are similar lists of sins which contain different examples. It’s interesting to note, however, the kinds of things he focuses on. These are things that are morally wrong according to the Old Testament law, and make the one doing it unclean. Sex outside the sacred bond of marriage between husband and wife is sin, as is desiring things that belong to others.

Idolatry is also singled out by Paul. It is anything that displaces God from His rightful place in our lives as Master, Saviour and first above all others. Idols aren’t simply graven images, or statues. We can make pretty much anything or anyone into an idol by thinking of them as more important than God. It could be a family member, hobby or sports team, none of which are necessarily bad or sinful in themselves. Rather it’s about making sure we don’t make them more important than they should be in a proper Godly outlook.

In verses 8 and 9 Paul continues to give us even more examples of how we used to live. However, with God’s help, these things should increasingly disappear from our lives. Some are perhaps easier to get rid of than others. ‘Obscene talk’, for example, is probably not something that many of us struggle with these days, but some of the others are tough. How easy is it to lie without thinking when someone asks us a difficult question? Do we think of others with malice if they have done us wrong? We desperately need the Holy Spirit to help us to become more like Jesus as this transformation is not something we can simply work at in our own strength.

Paul draws this section to a close by pointing us to our unity together in Jesus Christ. Although we come from different backgrounds, cultures and some are male and others female, we are all saved by Jesus and adopted into His family. Whatever our past ways of life may have been like, Jesus can and will transform us into wondrous new creations that over time become more and more like Him. This is the wonderful transforming power of the Gospel at work in us! It changes us from miserable sinners whose lives were characterised by sin and selfishness into beautiful new creations who live like our Saviour, Jesus Christ, walking in holiness and purity. Remember, though, that this is a process. We are not yet what we want to be, but thanks to God we are not what we once were either. Amen!

**Pastoral Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You for the blessed hope that is set before all those who trust in Christ Jesus as Saviour. Thank You that Christ is our life, and the day is coming when He will return to take us home to be with Him in heaven. O what a wonderful day that will be when, in our glorified bodies, we will see our Saviour face to face. In the meantime help us to become evermore like Jesus in our thoughts, words and deeds. May our witness draw others to You that they may also be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. In His Name we pray, amen.

**Benediction**

Thank You, Loving Lord, that the old, cursed creation has been replaced by a new, perfect creation in Christ and that by faith in Him, we have been transferred from the old creation to the new and are being renewed daily, spirit, soul, and body, until we stand face to face with Jesus, our Rock and our Redeemer. May we all live our new lives in spirit and truth to Your praise and glory today and forevermore. Amen.